

**CLASSIS OF NORTH GRAND RAPIDS
RULES OF ORDER
REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA
2023
Approved January 23, 2024**

ARTICLE 1. DEFINITION

The Classis of North Grand Rapids is an assembly of the Reformed Church in America consisting of the enrolled ministers of the classis, commissioned pastors serving under a commission approved by the classis, and elder delegates from the churches within the bounds of the classis. The classis is a permanent, continuing body which functions between sessions through its committees. It is governed by the Book of Church Order of the Reformed Church in America and by the Rules of Order set forth here.

ARTICLE 2. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CLASSIS OF NORTH GRAND RAPIDS

Section 1. Executive Committee

A. The Executive Committee of classis shall, subject to the approval of classis, carry on the work of the classis between sessions and perform the administrative work of classis.

B. The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Clerk, immediate past President, Congregational Care Committee Chair, Finance Committee Chair, Overtures & Judicial Business Committee Chair, Pastoral Care Committee Chair, Specialized Minister Chair, and Student Care Committee Chair.

1. The Executive Committee may include two additional at-large members. At-large members shall be elected to serve two-year terms at the September meeting of classis from a slate of nominees along with any nominations from the floor at the meeting.
2. The Clerk shall have the privilege of the floor at all meetings and shall not have the right to vote. The Clerk will serve at the pleasure of the classis or until submitting a letter of resignation to the classis.
3. The President and the Vice-President shall be nominated and elected at a September meeting of classis from a slate of nominees along with any nominations from the floor at the meeting. It is expected that the vice-president will be the primary nominee for

the office of president. They shall serve two-year terms in each office. A person may not be re-elected to either office until four years after their last term of service as president.

4. Vacancies may be filled by Executive Committee appointments and confirmed at the next stated session of classis.

C. The Executive Committee shall:

1. act as the classis nominating committee
2. receive appeals and overtures from consistories to classis and refer such overtures and appeals to the Overtures & Judicial Business Committee
3. prepare an agenda for each stated and special meeting of classis, and distribute it, along with printed reports and recommendations, to classis members at least 10 days prior to the stated or special meeting
4. consider requests for excused absences from stated classis meetings and assigned special meetings
5. oversee the work of the stated clerk and conduct a regular performance review
6. authorize the signing of documents on behalf of classis

D. The Executive Committee shall meet prior to the stated meetings of classis as regular meetings. A majority of the members of the Executive Committee must be present to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Special meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the President.

Section 2. Committees

A. Permanent committees shall be those whose responsibilities extend more than one year. The following are designated as permanent committees:

1. Congregational Care
2. Finance
3. Overtures & Judicial Business
4. Pastoral Care
5. Specialized Minister
6. Student Care

B. Ad hoc committees may be created by the classis or by the Executive Committee on behalf of Classis to oversee projects, functions, or objectives. The classis or Executive Committee may disband ad hoc committees.

C. Committee membership is open to all members of classis and all confessing members of classis churches.

1. Each committee will have a chairperson appointed by the Executive Committee from among committee members.
2. Each committee will have at least three members.
3. The regular term of office for members of permanent committees shall be for two years, beginning with the stated September meeting of classis.
4. The terms of committee members shall be staggered.
5. Permanent and ad hoc committee members may be elected to serve consecutive terms.
6. Vacancies may be filled by Executive Committee appointments and confirmed at the next stated session of classis.

D. At least three permanent committee members present at a meeting constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 3. Permanent Committees

A. Congregational Care Committee

The Congregational Care Committee shall help classis churches as they minister to the total life of all people by preaching, teaching, and living the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. assign classis supervisors and provide support to churches with a pastoral vacancy
2. in coordination with the Pastoral Care Committee, provide conflict transformation resources such as coaching to consistories or pastors experiencing ministry challenges
3. annually review elders meeting minutes, consistory meeting minutes, and constitutional inquiries
4. assist churches with planning and re-visioning
5. review and recommend action on churches' grant or resource requests

B. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall attend to all financial matters of the classis.

1. propose an annual budget for the classis at the September classis meeting, incorporating approved requests for salary aid, church loans, grants, and emergency assistance
2. ensure there is an auditing process of classis financial records
3. recommend investments for any funds of the classis kept on deposit

4. present the minimum salary scale for pastors at the September classis meeting
5. oversee the work of the Finance Manager and conduct regular performance reviews

C. Overtures & Judicial Business Committee

The Overtures & Judicial Business Committee shall ensure the classis conducts its work decently and in good order.

1. review proposed amendments to the Book of Church Order by General Synod and respond with suggestions for the classis;
2. serve as a special committee of classis to hear any complaints, appeals, or overtures referred to this committee by the Executive Committee;
3. annually review the Classis Rules of Order and recommend amendments to the classis as necessary
4. maintain a record of each church's bylaws
5. act upon requests from churches to alter the method of selecting elders and deacons prescribed in their bylaws

D. Pastoral Care Committee

The Pastoral Care Committee shall supervise and care for Commissioned Pastors and Ministers of Word & Sacrament serving or seeking to serve a church within the classis.

1. meet with and interview pastoral candidates before issuing a call
2. approve calls and contracts on behalf of the classis
 - i. if a church within the classis wishes to call a minister from outside the Reformed Church in America or a Formula of Agreement denomination, the approval of the call shall require an affirming vote from the entire classis
 - ii. ensure calls meet the requirements of the Call Formulary
3. supervise dissolution of pastoral relationships
4. provide pastoral care to pastors and their families in crisis
5. conduct exit interviews with pastors when they leave the classis or when a dissolution is granted

E. Specialized Minister Committee

The Specialized Minister Committee shall supervise and care for Ministers of Word & Sacrament serving as specialized ministers within the classis.

1. receive transfer requests from other classes

2. consider requests for ordination to specialized ministry and recommend action to the classis
3. annually review the Specialized Ministry Accountability Form and complete any follow up actions, designating ministers who no longer meet the criteria of specialized ministry to be “without charge”
4. provide pastoral care to ministers and their families in crisis

F. Student Care Committee

The Student Care Committee shall oversee students coming under the care of the classis seeking to be ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament

1. ensure that a student has received a certificate of readiness for examination from Western Theological Seminary, New Brunswick Theological Seminary, or develop a standard of proving readiness for examination from another seminary
2. interview all candidates for ministry
3. host a Student Care dinner each fall in order to build relationships, encourage students, and hear and respond to any student concerns
4. host a Student Care retreat each spring for the purpose of evaluating growth and helping students discern their vocation and calling
5. recommend a schedule and examiners for all student examinations
6. oversee Licensed Candidates and facilitate ordination services in coordination with the President

ARTICLE 3. MEETINGS

Section I. Schedule of Meetings

A. The stated meetings of North Grand Rapids Classis are the third Tuesday in February and September.

B. The meeting for Student Exams will be scheduled as necessary.

C. The president of classis shall call a special meeting of classis whenever special business requires it or upon the written request of two classis members and two elder delegates. Notice of the special meeting shall be distributed to classis members at least 10 days in advance.

Section 2. Attendance

A. The enrolled ministers of the classis, commissioned pastors serving under a commission approved by the classis, and elder delegates of classis churches shall attend each stated meeting of classis.

B. The enrolled ministers of the classis, commissioned pastors serving under a commission approved by the classis, and elder delegates of classis churches may attend each special meeting of classis and shall attend as assigned by the Executive Committee of classis.

1. Enrolled ministers and commissioned pastors unable to attend a stated meeting or a special meeting assignment shall inform the Clerk of their request for an excused absence.
2. Churches may send an alternate elder delegate when their delegate must be absent.

Section 3. Quorum

A. A quorum at a stated meeting of classis requires the presence of the majority of elder delegates in the classis and a majority of the enrolled ministers and commissioned pastors in the classis.

B. A quorum at a special meeting of classis requires three enrolled ministers and three elder delegates.

Section 4. Voting

A. Voting rights shall be limited to elder delegates, those enrolled ministers who are actively serving as ministers either under the jurisdiction of or with the approval of the classis, and commissioned pastors serving under a commission approved by the classis.

B. Voting shall be decided by a simple majority of the enrolled ministers of the classis, commissioned pastors serving under a commission approved by the classis, and elder delegates of classis churches who are present.

C. The Classis and Executive Committee may use electronic voting when directed to do so by the President. Classis committees may use electronic voting when directed to do so by their chair person. A simple majority of all eligible voters is required to determine a valid electronic voting result.

Section 5. Parliamentary Procedure

A. All procedures and acts of Classis shall be subject to the Book of Church Order of the

Reformed Church in America, in harmony with the government of the Reformed Church in America, and in accordance with the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

B. Robert's Rules of Order may be suspended in whole or in part for a Classis session or part of a Classis session by approval of two thirds of the members present.

Section 6. Meeting Location

A. Unless otherwise directed by the Executive Committee, the meeting place of classis shall follow the alphabetical listing of churches.

ARTICLE 4. DELEGATES TO THE GENERAL AND REGIONAL SYNODS

Section 1. Delegates

A. Minister delegates will be appointed from a list of enrolled ministers of the classis and commissioned pastors serving under a commission approved by the classis.

1. The list will be organized chronologically in the order each person became a member of classis.
2. Minister delegates may not have any unexcused absences and no more than one excused absence from stated meetings or assigned special meetings in the year prior to being appointed.
3. Minister delegates may defer an appointment to serve as a regional or general synod delegate one time. Upon a second deferral a minister delegate returns to the bottom of the list.

B. Elder delegates shall be nominated from the various churches of the classis in alphabetical order.

1. A delegate and an alternate shall be nominated from the same church.
2. If a church's delegate and alternates fail to attend synod, the church's turn is forfeited.

ARTICLE 5. AMENDMENTS AND SUSPENSIONS

Section 1. Amendments

A. These Rules of Order may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the classis members present at two successive stated meetings.

Section 2. Suspensions

A. These Rules of Order may be suspended for a single meeting by a super majority of 90% of the members present.