

Church Order of the Canadian Reformed Churches

as last revised by GS 2025

including Select Current Regulations and Mandates

I. Introduction

ARTICLE 1: Purpose and Division

For the maintenance of good order in the church of Christ it is necessary that there be offices and supervision of doctrine; assemblies; worship, sacraments, and ceremonies; and discipline.

II. Offices and Supervision of Doctrine

ARTICLE 2: The Offices

The offices are those of the minister of the Word, of the elder, and of the deacon.

ARTICLE 3: The Calling to Office

No one shall take any office upon himself without having been lawfully called thereto.

Only male members who have made profession of faith and may be considered to meet the conditions as set forth in Holy Scripture (e.g., in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1) shall be eligible for office.

The election to any office shall take place with the cooperation of the congregation, after preceding prayers, and according to the regulations adopted for that purpose by the consistory with the deacons.

The consistory with the deacons shall be free to give the congregation the opportunity beforehand to draw the attention of the consistory to brothers deemed fit for the respective offices.

The consistory with the deacons shall present to the congregation either as many candidates as there are vacancies to be filled, or at the most twice as many, from which number the congregation shall choose as many as are needed.

Those elected shall be appointed by the consistory with the deacons in accordance with the adopted regulations.

Prior to the ordination or installation the names of the appointed brothers shall be publicly announced to the congregation for its approbation on at least two consecutive Sundays.

The ordination or installation shall take place with the use of the relevant forms.

ARTICLE 4: Eligibility for the Ministry

A. Eligibility

Only those shall be called to the office of minister of the Word who

1. have been declared eligible for call by the churches;
2. are already serving in that capacity in one of the churches; or
3. have been declared eligible in, or are serving in, one of the churches with which the Canadian Reformed Churches maintain a sister-church relationship.

B. Declared Eligible

Only those shall be declared eligible for call within the churches who

1. have passed a preparatory examination by classis, which examination shall not take place unless those presenting themselves for it submit the documents necessary to prove that they are members in good standing of one of the churches and have successfully completed a course of study as required by the churches;

See Appendix 1 for General Synod decisions pertaining to Ecclesiastical Examinations

2. have served in churches with which the Canadian Reformed Churches do not maintain a sister-church relationship, and have been well tested for a reasonable period of time and examined by the classis in which they live, with due observance of the general ecclesiastical regulations adopted for that purpose; or
3. have been examined according to the rule described in Article 8.

C. Calling Twice

The approval of classis shall be required for a second call to the same minister regarding the same vacancy.

D. Counsellor

When a vacant church extends a call, the advice of the counsellor shall be sought.

ARTICLE 5: Ordination and Installation of Ministers of the Word

A. Regarding those who have not served in the ministry before, the following shall be observed:

1. They shall be ordained only after classis has approved the call. Classis shall approve the call
 - a. upon satisfactory testimony concerning the soundness of doctrine and conduct of the candidate, signed by the consistory of the church to which he belongs;
 - b. upon a peremptory examination of the candidate by classis with satisfactory results. This examination shall take place with the cooperation and concurring advice of deputies of the regional synod.

See Appendix 1 for General Synod decisions pertaining to Ecclesiastical Examinations

2. For the ordination they shall show also to the consistory good testimonials concerning their doctrine and conduct from the church(es) to which they have belonged since their preparatory examination.

B. Regarding those who are serving in the ministry the following shall be observed:

1. They shall be installed after classis has approved the call.

For this approbation as well as for the installation the minister shall show good testimonials concerning his doctrine and conduct, together with a declaration from the consistory with the deacons and from classis that he has been honourably discharged from his service in that church and classis, or from the church only, in case he remains within the same classis.
2. For the approbation by classis of a call to those who are serving in one of the churches with which the Canadian Reformed Churches maintain a sister-church relationship a

colloquium shall be required which will deal especially with the doctrine and polity of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

C. Further, for the approbation by classis of a call, the calling church shall submit a declaration that the proper announcements have been made and that the congregation has given its approval to the call.

ARTICLE 6: Bound to a Church

No one shall serve in the ministry unless he is bound to a certain church, either to be stationed in a certain place, or to be sent out for the gathering of the church from among the heathen or from among those who have become estranged from the gospel, or to be charged with some other special ministerial task.

ARTICLE 7: Recent Converts

No one who has recently come to the confession of the Reformed religion shall be declared eligible for call within the churches unless he has been well tested for a reasonable period of time and has been carefully examined by classis with the cooperation of the deputies of the regional synod.

ARTICLE 8: Exceptional Gifts

Persons who have not pursued the regular course of study shall not be admitted to the ministry unless there is assurance of their exceptional gifts of godliness, humility, modesty, good intellect, and discretion, as well as the gift of public speech.

When such persons present themselves for the ministry, classis, after the approval of regional synod, shall examine them in a preparatory examination and allow them to speak an edifying word in the churches of the classis; and further deal with them as it shall deem edifying, with observance of the general ecclesiastical regulations adopted for this purpose.

ARTICLE 9: From One Church to Another

A minister, once lawfully called, shall not leave the church to which he is bound to take up the ministry elsewhere without the consent of the consistory with the deacons and the approval of classis.

On the other hand, no church shall receive him unless he has presented a proper certificate of release from the church and the classis where he served, or of the church only, if he remains within the same classis.

ARTICLE 10: Proper Support

The consistory with the deacons, as representing the congregation, shall be bound to provide for the proper support of its minister(s).

ARTICLE 11: Dismissal

If a minister of the Word is judged unfit and incapable of serving the congregation fruitfully and to its edification, without there being any reason for church discipline, the consistory with the deacons shall not dismiss him from his service within the congregation without the approbation of classis and the concurring advice of the deputies of regional synod, and not without proper arrangements regarding the support of the minister and his family for a reasonable period of time.

If no call is forthcoming in three years, he shall be declared released from his ministerial status by the classis in which he served last.

ARTICLE 12: Bound for Life

Inasmuch as a minister of the Word, once lawfully called, is bound to the service of the church for life, he is not allowed to enter upon another vocation unless it be for exceptional and substantial reasons, of which the consistory with the deacons shall judge, and which shall receive the approval of classis with the concurring advice of deputies of regional synod.

ARTICLE 13: Retirement of Ministers

If a minister of the Word retires because of age, or because he is rendered incapable of performing the duties of his office on account of illness or physical or mental disability, he shall retain the honour and title of minister of the Word. He shall also retain his official bond with the church which he served last, and this church shall provide honourably for his support. The same obligation exists towards a minister's widow and/or dependents.

Retirement of a minister shall take place with the approval of the consistory with the deacons and with the concurring advice of classis and of deputies of regional synod.

ARTICLE 14: Temporary Release

If a minister, because of illness or for other substantial reasons, requests a temporary release from his service to the congregation, he can receive the same only with the approval of the consistory with the deacons and shall at all times be and remain subject to the call of the congregation.

ARTICLE 15: Preaching in Other Places

No one shall be permitted to preach the Word or to administer the sacraments in another church without the consent of the consistory of that church.

ARTICLE 16: The Office of Ministers of the Word

The specific duties of the office of minister of the Word are thoroughly and sincerely to proclaim to the congregation the Word of the Lord, to administer the sacraments, and publicly to call upon the name of God in behalf of the whole congregation; also to instruct the children of the church in the doctrine of salvation, to visit the members of the congregation in their homes, and to comfort the sick with the Word of God; and further, with the elders, to keep the church of God in good order, to exercise discipline, and to govern it in such a manner as the Lord has ordained.

ARTICLE 17: Equality Among the Ministers of the Word

Among the ministers of the Word equality shall be maintained with respect to the duties of their office and in other matters as far as possible, according to the judgment of the consistory and, if necessary, of classis.

ARTICLE 18: Missionaries

When ministers of the Word are sent out as missionaries, they shall be and remain subject to the Church Order. They shall report and give account of their labours to the church which sent them and shall at all times remain subject to its calling.

It shall be their task, in the specific region assigned to them or chosen by them in consultation with the church that sent them, to proclaim the Word of God, to administer the sacraments to those who have come to the profession of their faith, teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded his church, and to ordain elders and deacons when this appears feasible, according to the rules given in the Word of God.

ARTICLE 19: Training for the Ministry

The churches shall maintain an institution for the training for the ministry. The task of the professors of theology is to instruct the students of theology in those disciplines which have been entrusted to them, so that the churches may be provided with ministers of the Word who are able to fulfil the duties of their office as these have been described above.

ARTICLE 20: Students of Theology

The churches shall endeavour that there be students of theology, extending financial aid to those who are in need of it.

ARTICLE 21: An Edifying Word

Besides those who have been permitted, according to Article 8, to speak an edifying word, others may be given such consent in accordance with general ecclesiastical regulations, for their own training and in order that they may become known to the congregations.

ARTICLE 22: The Office of Elder

The specific duties of the office of elder are, together with the ministers of the Word, to have supervision over Christ's church, that every member may conduct himself properly in doctrine and life according to the gospel; and faithfully to visit the members of the congregation in their homes to comfort, instruct, and admonish them with the Word of God, reproving those who behave improperly. They shall exercise Christian discipline according to the command of Christ against those who show themselves unbelieving and ungodly and refuse to repent and shall watch that the sacraments are not profaned. Being stewards of the house of God, they are further to take care that in the congregation all things are done decently and in good order, and to tend the flock of Christ which is in their charge. Finally, it is the duty of elders to assist the ministers of the Word with good counsel and advice and to supervise their doctrine and conduct.

ARTICLE 23: The Office of Deacon

The specific duties of the office of deacon are to see to the good progress of the service of charity in the congregation; to acquaint themselves with existing needs and difficulties and exhort the members of Christ's body to show mercy; and further, to gather and manage the offerings and distribute them in Christ's name according to need. They shall encourage and comfort with the Word of God those who receive the gifts of Christ's love, and promote with word and deed the unity and fellowship in the Holy Spirit which the congregation enjoys at the table of the Lord.

ARTICLE 24: Term of Office

The elders and deacons shall serve two or more years, according to local regulations, and a proportionate number shall retire each year. The place of the retiring office-bearers shall be taken by others, unless the consistory with the deacons judges that the circumstances and the benefit of the church render it advisable to have them serve another term, or to extend their term, or to declare them immediately eligible for re-election.

ARTICLE 25: Equality to Be Maintained

Among the elders as well as among the deacons equality shall be maintained with respect to the duties of their office, and also, as far as possible, in other matters, of which the consistory shall judge.

ARTICLE 26: Subscription to the Confession

All ministers of the Word, elders, deacons, and professors of theology shall subscribe to the confessions of the Canadian Reformed Churches by signing the form(s) adopted for that purpose.

Anyone refusing to subscribe in that manner shall not be ordained or installed in office. Anyone who, being in office, refuses to do so shall, because of that very fact, be immediately suspended from office by the consistory with the deacons, and classis shall not receive him. If he obstinately persists in his refusal, he shall be deposed from office.

See Appendix 2 for the Forms for Subscription for use locally and at classis.

ARTICLE 27: False Doctrine

To ward off false doctrines and errors which could enter the congregation and constitute a danger to the purity of its doctrine or conduct, the ministers and elders shall use the means of instruction, of refutation, of warning, and of admonition, in the ministry of the Word as well as in Christian teaching and family visiting.

ARTICLE 28: Civil Authorities

As it is the office of the civil authorities to promote in every way the holy ministry, so all office-bearers are in duty bound to impress diligently and sincerely upon the whole congregation the obedience, love, and respect which are due to the civil authorities; they shall set a good example to the whole congregation in this matter, and endeavour by due respect and communication to secure and retain the favour of the authorities towards the church, so that the church of Christ may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way.

III. The Assemblies

ARTICLE 29: The Ecclesiastical Assemblies

Four kinds of ecclesiastical assemblies shall be maintained: the consistory, the classis, the regional synod, and the general synod.

ARTICLE 30: Ecclesiastical Matters

These assemblies shall deal with no other than ecclesiastical matters and that in an ecclesiastical manner.

A major assembly shall deal with those matters only which could not be finished in the minor assembly or which belong to its churches in common.

A new matter which has not previously been presented to that major assembly and is common to its churches may be put on the agenda by one of its churches.

ARTICLE 31: Appeals

If anyone complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to the major assembly; and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order.

ARTICLE 32: Credentials

Delegates to the major assemblies shall bring with them their credentials, signed by those sending them; they shall have a vote in all matters except those in which either they themselves or their churches are particularly involved.

ARTICLE 33: Proposals

Matters once decided upon may not be proposed again unless they are substantiated by new grounds.

ARTICLE 34: Proceedings

The proceedings of all assemblies shall begin and end with calling upon the name of the Lord.

At the close of major assemblies, censure shall be exercised over those who in the meeting have done something worthy of reproof, or who have scorned the admonition of the minor assemblies. Furthermore, each classis, regional synod, or general synod shall determine the time and place of the next classis, regional synod, or general synod respectively and appoint the convening church for that meeting.

ARTICLE 35: President

In all assemblies there shall be a president whose task it is to present and explain clearly the matters to be dealt with, to ensure that every one observe due order in speaking, to deny the floor to those who argue about minor things or who let themselves be carried away and cannot control their strong emotions, and to discipline those who refuse to listen.

In major assemblies the office of the president shall cease when the assembly has ended.

ARTICLE 36: Clerk

A clerk shall be appointed whose task it shall be to keep an accurate record of all things worthy to be recorded.

ARTICLE 37: Jurisdiction

The classis has the same jurisdiction over the consistory as the regional synod has over the classis, and the general synod over the regional synod.

ARTICLE 38: Consistory

In all churches there shall be a consistory composed of the ministers of the Word and the elders who, as a rule, shall meet at least once a month. As a rule the ministers of the Word shall preside. If a church is served by more than one minister, they shall preside in turn.

ARTICLE 39: Consistory and the Deacons

Where the number of elders is small, the deacons may be added to the consistory by local arrangement; this shall invariably be done where the number of elders or the number of deacons is less than three.

ARTICLE 40: Constitution of a Consistory

In places where a consistory is to be constituted for the first time or anew, this shall be done only with the advice of classis.

ARTICLE 41: Places without a Consistory

Places where as yet no consistory can be constituted shall be assigned by classis to the care of a neighbouring consistory.

ARTICLE 42: Meetings of Deacons

When the deacons meet separately, as a rule once a month, to deal with the matters pertaining to their office, they shall do so with calling upon the name of God. They shall give account of their labours to the consistory.

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The ministers shall acquaint themselves with the work of the ministry of mercy and, if need be, may visit these meetings.

ARTICLE 43: Archives

The consistories and the major assemblies shall ensure that proper care is taken of the archives.

See Appendix 3 for the Mandate for the Archiving Church of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

ARTICLE 44: Classis

Neighbouring churches shall come together in a classis by delegating, with proper credentials, a minister and an elder, or, if a church has no minister, two elders. Such meetings shall be held at least once every three months, unless the convening church, in consultation with the neighbouring church, concludes that no matters have been sent in by the churches which would warrant the convening of a classis. Cancellation of a classis shall, however, not be permitted to occur twice in succession.

In these meetings the ministers shall preside in rotation, or one shall be chosen to preside; however, the same minister shall not be chosen twice in succession.

The president shall ask whether the ministry of the office-bearers is being continued, whether the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured, and whether there is any matter in which the consistories need the judgment and help of classis for the proper government of their church.

The last classis before regional synod shall choose the delegates to that synod.

If two or more ministers are serving a church, those who have not been delegated shall have the right to attend classis in an advisory capacity.

ARTICLE 45: Counsellors

Each vacant church shall request classis to appoint as counsellor the minister it desires as such, to the end that he may assist the consistory in maintaining good order and especially may lend his aid in the matter of the calling of a minister; he shall also sign the letter of call.

ARTICLE 46: Church Visitors

Each year classis shall authorize at least two of the more experienced and able ministers to visit the churches in that year.

It shall be the task of these visitors to inquire whether all things are regulated and done in full harmony with the Word of God, whether the office-bearers fulfil the duties of their office faithfully as they have promised, and whether the adopted order is being observed and maintained in every respect, in order that they may in good time fraternally admonish those who are found negligent in any thing, and that by their good counsel and advice all things may be directed towards the edification and preservation of Christ's church.

They shall submit a written report of their visits to classis.

ARTICLE 47: Regional Synod

Each year some neighbouring classes shall send delegates to meet in a regional synod. If there are two classes, each classis shall delegate four ministers and four elders. If there are three classes, the number shall be three ministers and three elders. If there are four or more classes, the number shall be two ministers and two elders.

If it appears necessary to convene a regional synod before the appointed time, the convening church shall determine the time and place with the advice of classis.

The last regional synod before the general synod shall choose delegates to that general synod.

ARTICLE 48: Deputies of Regional Synod

Each regional synod shall appoint deputies who are to assist the classes in all cases provided for in the Church Order, and, upon the request of the classes, in cases of special difficulties.

These deputies shall keep proper record of their actions and submit a written report to regional synod, and, if so required, they shall give account of their actions.

They shall not be discharged from their task before and until regional synod itself discharges them.

ARTICLE 49: General Synod

The general synod shall be held once every three years. Each regional synod shall delegate to this synod six ministers and six elders.

If it appears necessary to convene a general synod before the appointed time, the convening church shall determine the time and place with the advice of regional synod.

See Appendix 4 for the Guidelines for General Synod.

See Appendix 5 for the Guidelines for the Convening Church of a General Synod Regarding Synod Finances.

ARTICLE 50: Ecumenical relationships

Ecumenical relationships with other churches of Reformed confession shall be entered into where feasible and be maintained according to the rules adopted for this purpose by general synod. On minor points of ecclesiastical governance and practice churches shall not be rejected.

See Appendix 6 for the Rules for Ecumenical Relationships.

ARTICLE 51: Mission

The churches shall endeavour to fulfil their missionary task.

When churches cooperate in this matter, they shall, as much as possible, observe the division into classes and regional synods.

IV. Worship, Sacraments, and Ceremonies

ARTICLE 52: Worship Services

The consistory shall call the congregation together for worship twice on the Lord's day.

The consistory shall ensure that, as a rule, once every Sunday the doctrine of God's Word as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism is proclaimed.

ARTICLE 53: Days of Commemoration

Each year the churches shall, in the manner decided upon by the consistory, commemorate the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as his outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE 54: Days of Prayer

In time of war, general calamities, and other great afflictions the presence of which is felt throughout the churches, a day of prayer may be proclaimed by the churches appointed for that purpose by general synod.

ARTICLE 55: Psalms and Hymns

The 150 Psalms of the Bible are foundational to the church's worship and are to be sung frequently in the worship services. General synod shall adopt metrical versions of the Psalms and shall approve hymns for inclusion in a song book which shall, as a rule, have the principal place in the worship of the church. The consistory may also approve the singing of alternate settings of the psalms and additional hymns, provided they are in harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity.

ARTICLE 56: Administration of Sacraments

The sacraments shall be administered only under the authority of the consistory, in a public worship service, by a minister of the Word, with the use of the adopted forms.

ARTICLE 57: Baptism

The consistory shall ensure that the covenant of God is sealed by baptism to the children of believers as soon as feasible.

ARTICLE 58: Schools

The consistory shall ensure that the parents, to the best of their ability, have their children attend a school where the instruction given is in harmony with the Word of God as the church has summarized it in her confessions.

ARTICLE 59: Baptism of Adults

Adults who have not been baptized shall be incorporated into the Christian church by holy baptism upon their public profession of faith.

ARTICLE 60: Lord's Supper

The Lord's supper shall be celebrated at least once every three months.

ARTICLE 61: Admission to the Lord's Supper

The consistory shall admit to the Lord's supper only those who have made public profession of the Reformed faith and lead a godly life.

Members of sister churches shall be admitted on the ground of a good attestation concerning their doctrine and conduct.

ARTICLE 62: Attestations

Communicant members who move to a sister church shall be given, after previous announcements to the congregation, an attestation regarding their doctrine and conduct, signed on behalf of the consistory by two of its members.

In the case of non-communicant members such an attestation shall be sent directly to the consistory of the church concerned.

ARTICLE 63: Marriage

The Word of God teaches that marriage is a union between one man and one woman.

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The consistory shall ensure that the members of the congregation marry only in the Lord, and that the ministers—as authorized by the consistory—solemnize only such marriages as are in accordance with the Word of God.

The solemnization of a marriage may take place either in a private ceremony or in a public worship service. The adopted Form for the Solemnization of Marriage shall be used.

ARTICLE 64: Church Records

The consistory shall maintain church records in which the names of the members and the dates of their birth, baptism, public profession of faith, marriage, and departure or death are properly recorded.

ARTICLE 65: Funerals

Funerals are not ecclesiastical but family affairs, and should be conducted accordingly.

V. Christian Discipline

ARTICLE 66: Nature and Purpose

Since church discipline is of a spiritual nature and, as one of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, has been given to the church to shut and to open that kingdom, the consistory shall ensure that it is used to punish sins against both the purity of doctrine and the piety of conduct, in order to reconcile the sinner with the church and with his neighbour, and to remove all offence out of the church of Christ—which can be done only when the rule given by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 is followed in obedience.

ARTICLE 67: Consistory Involvement

The consistory shall not deal with any matter pertaining to purity of doctrine or piety of life that is reported to it unless it has first ascertained that both private admonitions and admonitions in the presence of one or two witnesses have remained fruitless, or that the sin committed is of a public character.

ARTICLE 68: Excommunication

Anyone who obstinately rejects the admonition by the consistory or who has committed a public sin shall be suspended from the Lord's supper. If he continues to harden himself in sin, the consistory shall so inform the congregation by means of public announcements, in order that the congregation may be engaged in prayer and admonition, and the excommunication may not take place without its cooperation.

In the first public announcement the name of the sinner shall not be mentioned.

In the second public announcement, which shall be made only after the advice of classis has been obtained, the name and address of the sinner shall be mentioned.

In the third public announcement a date shall be set at which the excommunication of the sinner shall take place.

In case a non-communicant member hardens himself in sin, the consistory shall in the same manner inform the congregation by means of public announcements.

In the first public announcement the name of the sinner shall not be mentioned.

In the second public announcement, which shall be made only after the advice of classis has been obtained, the name and address of the sinner shall be mentioned and a date shall be set at which the excommunication of the sinner shall take place.

The time between the various announcements shall be determined by the consistory.

ARTICLE 69: Repentance

When someone repents of a public sin or of a sin which had to be reported to the consistory, the latter shall not accept his confession of sin unless he has shown real amendment.

The consistory shall determine whether the benefit of the congregation requires that this confession of sin shall be made publicly and, in case it is made before the consistory or before two or three office-bearers, whether the congregation shall be informed afterwards.

ARTICLE 70: Readmission

When someone who has been excommunicated repents and desires to be again received into the communion of the church, the congregation shall be informed of his desire in order to see whether there are any lawful objections.

The time between the public announcement and the readmission of the sinner shall be not less than one month.

If no lawful objection is raised, the readmission shall take place with the use of the form for that purpose.

ARTICLE 71: Suspension and Deposition of Office-Bearers

When ministers, elders, or deacons have committed a public or otherwise gross sin, or refuse to heed the admonitions by the consistory with the deacons, they shall be suspended from office by the judgment of their own consistory with the deacons and of the consistory with the deacons of the neighbouring church. When they harden themselves in their sin or when the sin committed is of such a nature that they cannot continue in office, elders or deacons shall be deposed by the judgment of the above-mentioned consistories with the deacons. Classis, with the concurring advice of the deputies of regional synod, shall judge whether the ministers are to be deposed.

ARTICLE 72: Serious and Gross Sins on the Part of Office-Bearers

As serious and gross sins which are grounds for the suspension or deposition of office-bearers the following are to be mentioned particularly: false doctrine or heresy, public schisms, blasphemy, simony, faithless desertion of office or intrusion upon that of another, perjury, adultery, fornication, theft, acts of violence, habitual drunkenness, brawling, unjustly enriching oneself, and, further, all sins and serious misdemeanours that rate as ground for excommunication with respect to other members of the church.

ARTICLE 73: Christian Censure

The ministers, elders, and deacons shall mutually exercise Christian censure and shall exhort and kindly admonish one another with regard to the execution of their office.

ARTICLE 74: No Lording It over Others

No church shall in any way lord it over other churches, no office-bearer over other office-bearers.

ARTICLE 75: Property of the Churches

All property, both real and personal, which belongs to the churches comprised respectively in classes, regional synods, and general synods in common, shall be held in trust for such churches in equal shares by deputies or trustees appointed for that purpose from time to time by the appropriate classis, regional synod, or general synod, and such deputies or trustees shall be

bound by the terms of their appointment and instruction and are subject to being discharged by a subsequent classis, regional synod, or general synod.

ARTICLE 76: Observance and Revision of the Church Order

These articles, which regard the lawful order of the church, have been adopted with common accord. If the interest of the churches demand such, they may and ought to be changed, augmented, or diminished. However, no consistory, classis, or regional synod shall be permitted to do so, but they shall endeavour diligently to observe the articles of this Church Order as long as they have not been changed by a general synod.

Appendix 1 (CO 4 & 5) – Regulation Ecclesiastical Exams.

Sources: GS 1958 Art. 188, GS 2022 Art. 143

I. Preparatory Examination

I.1 To be eligible for call in one of the churches, one must have successfully sustained the preparatory examination.

The preparatory examination will take place in the classis where the church that sent the student's original attestation to the federational seminary belongs. The preparatory examination for a student not originating within the Canadian & American Reformed Churches is to occur in the classis where the student resides.

I.2 At the preparatory examination the following documents must be presented:

I.2.a Proof that the student has successfully completed the required course of study as referred to in the decisions of Homewood-Carman 1958 (Acts, Art.151).

I.2.b An attestation from the church or churches to which the students has belonged for the last three years.

I.3 The preparatory examination will inquire into the student's

I.3.a capacity to preach; to this end the student is assigned a text, no more than three weeks before the examination, on which he will prepare a sermon-proposal to be read at classis; this proposal will then be discussed.

I.3.b ability to exegete the Holy Scriptures for the congregation according to the original texts; to this end the student will be assigned, at least two weeks prior to the examination, one chapter from the Old Testament and one chapter from the New Testament.

I.3.c knowledge of the doctrine of the church.

I.4 Upon sustaining the preparatory examination the candidate must promise, when speaking edifyingly to the congregation, not to teach anything that is not in accordance with the reformed confession. He will then be declared eligible for call as a candidate and receive a written copy of this declaration.

I.5 The preparatory examination will be held at no cost if it coincides with a regularly scheduled classis.

Note: Synod is of the opinion that the so-called "inquiry into the motives for seeking the Ministry" should not be treated as a separate matter, but should take place during and through the manner of examining as described under 4.

II. Peremptory Examination

II.1 This examination is conducted by the classis to which the calling church belongs, with the co-operation of at least two of the deputies appointed for this purpose by Regional Synod.

II.2 Before the examination can take place classis must be provided with:

II.2.a the letter of call and the letter of acceptance.

II.2.b proof of successfully sustaining the preparatory examination by which the candidate was declared eligible for call in the churches.

- II.2.c an attestation from the church or churches to which he has belonged since his preparatory examination.
- II.3 The peremptory examination is to last at least three hours and shall cover the following subjects:
 - II.3.a a sermon-proposal on a text chosen by the candidate himself, followed by a discussion of this sermon-proposal.
 - II.3.b exegesis of Holy Scripture according to the original text; to this end the candidate will be assigned, at least three weeks in advance, two chapters from the Old Testament and two chapters from the New Testament.
 - II.3.c knowledge of the content of Holy Scripture, which comprises not only knowledge of the Biblical history as such with related theological “subjects”, but also knowledge of the main contents of all the books of the Bible, so that it becomes evident that the candidate is sufficiently familiar with Holy Scripture.
 - II.3.d knowledge of the doctrine of the church, as well as its history, its defence and its explanation.
 - II.3.e knowledge of the history of the church.
 - II.3.f Knowledge of the commandments of the LORD with respect to their significance for the Christian life.
 - II.3.g knowledge of the Church Order.
 - II.3.h knowledge of the requirements for exercising the various duties of the offices.

Note: It is the responsibility of classis to divide the exam-time over the different subjects.
- II.4 After successfully sustaining the examination the candidate must sign the Form of Subscription, established in 1619 for ministers of the Word.
- II.5 In case of a conflict between classis and the deputies of Regional Synod regarding the result of the examination, the matter is to be decided by Regional Synod.
- II.6 The peremptory examination will be held at no cost if it coincides with a regularly scheduled classis.

Appendix 2 (CO 26) – Forms of Subscription

Form to be used in the local congregation:

We, the undersigned, ministers of God's Word, elders and deacons of the Canadian Reformed Church at _____, do, by our subscription, declare sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord that we heartily believe that the whole doctrine contained in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort fully agrees with the Word of God.

We promise, therefore, that we will diligently teach this doctrine and faithfully defend it without contradicting it publicly or privately in teaching or writing. We also declare that we reject all errors conflicting with the doctrine expressed in these confessions and promise to oppose, refute and help prevent such errors.

If at any time in the future it should happen that we would disagree with this doctrine or any part of it, we promise that we will not propose, teach, preach or publish our opinion, either publicly or privately; rather, we will first make this known to the consistory and the classis, and if necessary to the broader assemblies, for judgment. We are willing to submit to their decision; if we refuse we will by that very fact be suspended from our office.

If at any time the consistory, classis or regional synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion and in order to maintain the unity and purity of the teaching, would decide to require of us a further explanation of our views, we do hereby promise that we are always willing and ready to comply under the penalty of suspension.

However, we reserve the right of appeal if we believe ourselves wronged. During the time of appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of consistory or classis or regional synod.

Form to be used at classis meetings:

We, the undersigned, ministers of God's Word belonging to Classis _____, do, by our subscription,

declare sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord that we heartily believe that the whole doctrine contained in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort fully agrees with the Word of God.

We promise, therefore, that we will diligently teach this doctrine and faithfully defend it without contradicting it publicly or privately in teaching or writing. We also declare that we reject all errors conflicting with the doctrine expressed in these confessions and promise to oppose, refute and help prevent such errors.

If at any time in the future it should happen that we would disagree with this doctrine or any part of it, we promise that we will not propose, teach, preach or publish our opinion, either publicly or privately; rather, we will first make this known to the consistory and the classis, and if necessary to the broader assemblies, for judgment. We are willing to submit to their decision; if we refuse we will by that very fact be suspended from our office.

If at any time the classis or regional synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion and in order to maintain the unity and purity of the teaching, would decide to require of us a further explanation of our views, we do hereby promise that we are always willing and ready to comply under the penalty of suspension.

However, we reserve the right of appeal if we believe ourselves wronged. During the time of appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of classis or regional synod.

Appendix 3 (CO 43) – Mandate for the Archiving Church

Last Revised: GS 2025

Mandate for the Church appointed to maintain the Archives of the General Synods of the Canadian Reformed Churches

From the first General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Synod Homewood in 1954, General Synods have expressed the desirability of maintaining the records of their meetings, the decisions made and all the supporting documents used as rationale for making the decisions. This is in line with the requirements of keeping archives as expressed in Church Order Article 43. In order to consistently preserve and maintain the materials from general synods and from committees appointed to serve general synods, General Synod appoints a church responsible for collecting and preserving the material in an archive. For continuity, the Burlington-Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church is the designated Archive Church and is to be re-appointed by each General Synod.

The Archive Church shall adhere to the following mandate adopted by General Synod:

- A. The Archive Church shall appoint a person to be the Archivist, who is responsible for the work of collecting and maintaining the archives.
- B. The Archive Church shall provide a suitable secure place for keeping the archives, and shall supply filing cabinets and whatever other items are required. Costs are to be reimbursed from the General Fund.
- C. The Archive Church shall submit a report on the condition and activity of the archives to each General Synod six months prior to convocation.
- D. The Archive Church shall, within three months of the end of each General Synod, send a letter to each committee requesting that they submit for the archives any materials more than ten years old, and which they no longer need for their duties as committees of General Synod. The materials submitted are left to the discretion of the committees, which may decide to keep their own archives to facilitate their duties.
- E. The archives of General Synod shall contain the following materials in hard copy pertaining to General Synods:
 - One copy of the acts of each General Synod;
 - One copy of all the reports of the committees of General Synod and their sub-committees;
 - One copy of all correspondence regarding the calling of General Synod sent by the church responsible for calling General Synod;
 - One copy of the credentials of the delegates to General Synod;
 - One signed copy of all the correspondence to and from each General Synod filed in binders, particular to each General Synod, and in the order of the agenda of the General Synod;
 - One copy of all material from the committees and their sub-committees, including meeting minutes, correspondence, and documents; and

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- One copy of each annual yearbook of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches.

The materials shall be properly catalogued in an index to facilitate reference.

- F. Non-confidential documents of the General Synod archives may be obtained as photocopies at the expense of the person requesting them.
- G. The archives shall be made available for inspection by the delegates from the church appointed by the previous General Synod to inspect the archives and submit a report to the next General Synod.

Appendix 4 (CO 49) – Guidelines for General Synod¹

Last Revised: GS 2025.

1. Convening and Constitution of Synod

- 1.1 The convening church² shall set the date on which synod shall meet (cf. CO Art. 49). It shall give notice of this date to all the churches of the federation *two years* in advance of the date for the next general synod. It shall also publish this date at www.canrc.org.

The convening church shall publish the date along with the rule:

All material for general synod should be received by the convening church in paper or digital format (searchable text PDF as much as feasible) no later than six weeks prior to the convocation date of general synod. Those submitting material shall ensure that one signed copy is available for the archives of General Synod.³ Material received after this date shall ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless synod is satisfied that the reasons given for later arrival are reasonable.⁴

- 1.2.1 The convening church shall take responsibility for preparing a provisional agenda for synod. To this end, it shall receive and organize all submissions in an orderly and transparent manner. This includes:
- 1.2.1.1 Creating a synod-specific email address for all synod-related correspondence and submissions.
 - 1.2.1.2 Acknowledging receipt of submissions and maintaining a tracking log that records the source, subject, date received, and format of each item.
 - 1.2.1.3 Assigning each submission to a suitable agenda category (e.g., reports, overtures, appeals, correspondence) and assigning each item a unique provisional agenda number.
 - 1.2.1.4 Standardizing document formats (e.g., searchable PDF) and applying consistent file naming conventions that reflect the agenda number, topic, source, and date.
 - 1.2.1.5 Coordinating with the federation's website committee to ensure that all public materials are posted consistently and accessibly while also ensuring confidentiality of delegate-only items.
 - 1.2.1.6 Preparing a shared digital folder system for synod delegates, organized by agenda categories and item numbers, containing all submitted materials in downloadable form.
 - 1.2.1.7 Distributing the provisional agenda and supporting materials as follows:

¹ Given changes made by GS 2025 to these Guidelines and given that the Guidelines used a 'numbering' system that mixed Roman numerals, letters, and Arabic numerals, the executive decided post GS 2025 to renumber the Guidelines using just Arabic numerals.

² GS 2022 adopted a further set of Guidelines for the Convening Church. See GS 2022 Appendix 29.

³ GS 2019 Art. 122, among others replacing a change made by GS 2013 Art. 176.

⁴ GS 1995 Art. 111; GS 2004 Art. 118.

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- 1.2.1.7.1 To all synod delegates: the full agenda with hyperlinks to all supporting documents, including appeals and church correspondence.
 - 1.2.1.7.2 To all churches and the federation's website: the full agenda with hyperlinks only to public materials (i.e., reports and overtures). Items such as appeals or correspondence from individual churches are to be listed in the agenda but not made publicly available.
 - 1.2.1.7.3 Sending the provisional agenda to the churches and federation website 6 months and 6 weeks before synod.
 - 1.2.1.7.4 Sending provisional agendas to the delegates at intervals of approximately 6 months, 4 months, 3 months, and 6 weeks prior to synod.⁵
- 1.3⁶ Correspondence from the convening church, including the notice of convocation, agendas, reports, and proposals may be sent to the churches and/or delegates as digital files. However, in order to maintain the confidentiality of potentially sensitive material, personal appeals as well as other documents which contain personal information (e.g., letters of appointment) must be sent from the convening church as password-protected digital files.⁷
- 1.4 The convening church shall send the first provisional agenda to all the churches at least six months prior to convocation.
- 1.5 All material submitted to the convening church together with a copy of the current *Guidelines for General Synods* shall be sent to all delegates and the first alternates.⁸ All material submitted to synod, including reports, appeals, and overtures which quote any foreign language source must provide in the text of the submission a full English translation and in a footnote the citation in the original language.⁹
- 1.6 All material for synod should be received by the convening church in paper or digital format (searchable text PDF as much as feasible) no later than six weeks prior to the convocation date of general synod. Those submitting material shall ensure that one signed copy is available for the archives of general synod.¹⁰ Material received after this date shall ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless synod is satisfied that the reasons given for later arrival are reasonable.¹¹
- 1.7 Since matters on the agenda of general synod involve the churches in common, regional synods shall distribute copies of adopted overtures to all the churches in the federation no later than five months prior to the convening of a general synod.¹²

⁵ GS 2019 Art. 122, GS 2025 Art. 185. Given it's own subsection number in 2025.

⁶ What is now 1.3 was I.B in the 2022 Guidelines, 1.4 was I.C, and so on.

⁷ GS 2013 Art. 176.

⁸ GS 1986 Art. 76; GS 1995 Art. 111.

⁹ GS 1989 Art. 131.

¹⁰ GS 2019 Art. 122, among others replacing a change made by GS 2013 Art. 176.

¹¹ GS 1986 Art. 162; GS 1995 Art. 110.

¹² GS 2010 Art. 35, 174.

- 1.8 The minister of the convening church or its counselor shall act as chairman until synod has been constituted.
 - 1.8.1 He shall call the meeting to order in an ecclesiastical manner (cf. Art. 34, CO);
 - 1.8.2. He shall have the credentials examined as to whether general synod can be constituted.
- 1.9 Officers of synod shall be chosen by ballot in this order: chairman, vice-chairman, first clerk, and second clerk, with consideration made to avoid the reappointment of the same individuals to the same position for more than two (2) consecutive synods. Election to office is to be by majority of valid votes cast.¹³
- 1.10 Although advice can be requested in particular matters, advisory members shall not be appointed.¹⁴
- 1.11 The convening church shall arrange to have people present during synod to assist the clerks in preparing the *Acts* and to do other paperwork.¹⁵

2. Duties of the Officers

- 2.1 The Chairman
 - 2.1.1 The chairman shall see to it that business is transacted in the proper order and is expedited as much as possible, and that members observe the rules of order and decorum (cf. CO 34, 35).
 - 2.1.2 He shall call the meeting to order at the appointed time, call the roll and shall see to it that each session is properly opened and closed.
 - 2.1.3 He shall welcome fraternal delegates or other guests and respond to greetings received or appoint other members for this purpose.
 - 2.1.4 He shall place before synod every motion that is made and seconded, in accord with the accepted order; and he shall clearly state every question before a vote is taken, so that every member may know on what he is voting.
 - 2.1.5 If the chairman feels the need to speak on a pending question, he shall relinquish the chair to the vice-chairman for that period of time. While holding the chair, he may speak to state matters of fact or to inform synod regarding points of order.
 - 2.1.6 He shall have, and duly exercise, the prerogative of declaring a motion or a person out of order. If his ruling is challenged, it shall be submitted to synod for decision by majority vote.
 - 2.1.7 The chairman shall retain his right to vote on any question.
 - 2.1.8 In case of a point of order, the chairman must make a ruling at once. This ruling may be reversed by a majority of synod, if any member is dissatisfied with the ruling of the chair and appeals to the floor.
 - 2.1.9 The chairman shall close the synod with appropriate remarks and prayer (CO 34).
- 2.2 The Vice-Chairman

¹³ GS 2025 Art. 139.

¹⁴ GS 2007, Art. 147.

¹⁵ GS 2010, Art. 174.

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2.2.1 The vice-chairman shall, in the absence of the chairman, assume all his duties and privileges.

2.2.2 The vice-chairman shall render all possible assistance to the chairman as circumstances require.

2.2.3 He shall prepare the press release.

2.3 The First Clerk

2.3.1 Every morning, after the roll call, he shall present the *Acts* of the previous day.

2.3.2 He shall keep a proper record of the business of synod. This record should ordinarily contain:

2.3.2.1 The opening and closing of sessions and roll call.

2.3.2.2 All motions whether carried or defeated.

2.3.2.3 All final reports of committees and all decisions of synod.

2.3.2.4 Any document or part of debate or address that synod by a majority vote has decided to insert in the *Acts*.

2.3.3 He shall not include in the *Acts* any motion that was withdrawn.

2.4 The Second Clerk

2.4.1 The second clerk shall serve in the absence of the first clerk.

2.4.2 He shall render assistance to the first clerk as circumstances require.

2.4.3 He shall handle outgoing mail on behalf of synod.

3. Synodical Committees

3.1 Advisory Committees of Synod

3.1.1 The officers of synod shall propose advisory committees, with a convener, to serve for the duration of synod.

3.1.2 The officers of synod shall propose an arrangement of matters on the agenda to the appropriate committees.

3.1.3 All reports shall be distributed in ample time before they are presented for discussion.

3.1.4 The committee reporter shall present the reports.

3.1.5 If there is a minority report as well as a majority report, both reports shall be given into discussion, but the majority report shall be voted upon first.

3.1.6 During the discussion, the task of defending the report shall rest primarily with the reporter of the committee. Other committee members shall receive the privilege of the floor to elaborate on or clarify any point.

3.1.7 In order to facilitate the discussion on a pending issue, the chair shall ordinarily call for the discussion in two parts (rounds). In the first part opportunity is given to members to express remarks related to the issue in question. In the second or following parts, members may react to the discussion or the issue in question.

3.1.8 The discussion may be extended by discretion of the chairman or by a decision of Synod.

3.1.9 If anyone has been requested to advise synod on any matter, he shall address synod on this point only when asked to do so by the chair.

3.2 (Inter-)Synod Committees

3.2.1 All committees appointed by synod shall see to it that they send a copy of their report in digital format to each of the local churches.¹⁶

4. Rules of Order

4.1 Closed Sessions of Synod

4.1.1 A closed session shall ordinarily mean a session where members of synod and office-bearers may be present. This shall be used in delicate or unusual situations.

4.1.2 A closed-restricted session shall, as a rule, mean a session where members of synod only may be present. This shall only take place when synod judges that such a course is dictated by due regard for personal honour or the welfare of the churches in extremely delicate situations.

4.2 Main Motions

A main motion is one which presents a certain subject for consideration or action.

4.2.1 A main motion is acceptable under the following conditions:

4.2.1.1 The mover has been recognized by the chair.

4.2.1.2 The motion has been seconded.

4.2.1.3 The motion is also presented in writing.

4.2.2 A main motion is not acceptable if another main motion is before synod or if it conflicts with any decision already made by synod.

4.2.3 A notice of motion may be given during the discussion.

4.3 A Motion to Amend

This is a proposal to alter a main motion in language or in meaning before final action is taken on the motion.

4.1.1 A motion to amend may propose any of the following: to strike out, to insert, or to substitute certain words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs.

4.1.2 A motion to amend is not a proper amendment if it nullifies the main motion or is not germane to it.

4.1.3 A motion to amend an amendment is permissible and is called a secondary motion.

4.4 Call for a Division of the Question

At the request of one or more members of synod, a motion consisting of more than one part must be divided and voted upon separately, unless synod decides that this is not necessary.

4.5 Objection to Consideration of a Question

If any member is not satisfied with the ruling of the chair, the matter is referred to synod for a decision.

4.6 Right of Protest

It is the right of any member to protest against any decision of synod. Protest should be registered immediately, or during the session in which the matter concerned was acted

¹⁶ GS 1995 Art. 110; GS 2013 Art. 176.

upon. Protests must be registered individually and not in groups. Members may, if they feel the need, ask to have their negative vote recorded. Such requests must be made immediately after the vote is taken.

4.7 Motion to Bring Matters Once Decided Again Before Synod

Any member of synod, for weighty reasons, may move to have a matter reconsidered, which was previously decided. The purpose of this motion is to propose a new discussion and a new vote.

4.8 Discussion

4.8.1 To obtain the floor, a speaker must be recognized by the chair.

4.8.2 If any member has spoken twice on a pending issue, others who have not yet spoken twice shall, as a rule, be given priority by the chair.

4.8.3 When the chairman believes that a motion under consideration has been debated sufficiently, he may propose cessation of debate. If a majority of synod sustains his proposal, discussion shall cease and the vote shall be taken.

4.8.4 Any member of synod, when he deems a matter to have been debated sufficiently, may move to close the discussion. Should a majority be in favour, the vote shall be taken, but only after those who have already requested the floor have been recognized.

4.9 Voting

4.9.1 It is in the freedom of the chair to determine how the vote is to be taken: by calling the roll (in any order) or by show of hands.¹⁷

4.9.2 Voting about persons shall be by ballot.

4.9.3 Voting about delicate matters and other matters of a critical nature shall also be by ballot.

5. Revision

These *Guidelines for General Synod* may be suspended, amended, revised or abrogated by a majority vote of Synod.

¹⁷ GS 2010 Art. 174.

Appendix 5 (CO 49) – Guidelines for the Convening Church of a General Synod Regarding Synod Expenses

Last revised: GS 2022

1. Funding: The convening church shall set up a General Synod Account and appoint a treasurer. The treasurer shall contact the treasurers of the regional synods for funding to cover all expenses pertaining to the general synod. Expenses will be shared between the two regional synods on a 50/50 basis. (See Yearbook for treasurers of each regional synod).
2. Operational Expenses: Operational expenses incurred as a direct result of hosting the general synod which do not have a net benefit post-synod to the convening church will be reimbursed at cost. This includes but is not limited to IT, facilities, and correspondence.
3. Travel for fraternal delegates and invited observers as invited by the interchurch relations committee(s):
 - 3.1 Travel to synod: Cost for travel is the responsibility of the delegating body.
 - 3.2 Transportation during synod: The convening church will arrange transportation to and from the airport, train station, or bus depot and provide transportation to general synod and incidental travel during the synod. Submission for costs incurred in providing transportation in connection with general synod are to be reimbursed at the CRA rate.
4. Accommodations: For delegates, fraternal delegates and invited observers as invited by the interchurch relation committee(s):
 - 4.1 Accommodations are arranged by the convening church via rental and/or billeting. Accommodations can include support for the spouse of a delegate;
 - 4.2 Submissions for reimbursement of the rentals are administered via the general synod budget administered by the convening church.
5. Meals:
 - 5.1 Meals are exclusively for the members of general synod and invited guests via the venue of the general synod or arranged by the convening church via billeting;
 - 5.2 Reimbursements for meal expenses are administered via the general synod budget administered by the convening church.
6. At the conclusion of synod, the books will be reviewed by the church appointed for that purpose. A financial report is to be submitted to the next general synod.

Appendix 6 (CO 50) – Rules for Ecumenical Relationships

Rule 1

Level 1 – Ecclesiastical Fellowship

At a federative level, the following shall apply by decision of General Synod:

Ecclesiastical Fellowship – Category A is with other churches of Reformed confession according to CO art. 50. This relationship is maintained with churches with which we have **intense contact**. This relationship is to be exercised where possible and desirable by:

- (1) Exchange of fraternal delegates at major assemblies.
- (2) The exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting Christian unity and whenever feasible striving for ecclesiastical unity.
- (3) Agreement to respect the procedures of discipline and pastoral concern of one another.
- (4) Pulpit fellowship.
- (5) Reception of members at the Lord's supper according to local regulations.
- (6) Reception of members into the local congregation, according to local regulations.
- (7) Consultation on issues of joint concern, particularly prior to instituting changes in doctrine, worship and governance which might affect the basis of the fellowship.
- (8) Joint action in areas of common responsibility.
- (9) Exchange of relevant ecclesiastical materials, including:
 - a. The Minutes/Acts of major assemblies;
 - b. Yearbooks/Directories of the churches;
 - c. The most recently published edition of the Confessional Standards;
 - d. The most recent published edition of the Church Order;
 - e. The most recently published edition of an approved psalter, or psalter-hymnal.

Ecclesiastical Fellowship - Category B is with other churches of Reformed confession according to CO art. 50. This relationship is maintained with churches with whom we have **less intense contact** for geographical, linguistic, or historical reasons. This relationship is to be exercised where possible and desirable by:

- (1) Welcome of fraternal observers at appropriate major assemblies.
- (2) Agreement to respect the procedures of discipline and pastoral concern of one another.
- (3) Pulpit fellowship.
- (4) Reception of members at the Lord's supper according to local regulations.
- (5) Reception of members into the local congregation, according to local regulations.
- (6) Communication on issues of joint concern.
- (7) Review relevant ecclesiastical materials and monitor faithfulness to the Reformed confessions.

Level 2 – Ecclesiastical Contact

Ecclesiastical Contact is with other churches of Reformed confession with which we do not have Ecclesiastical Fellowship. Such churches may include churches with membership in NAPARC, or the ICRC, as well as other churches as determined by general synod. This relationship is to be exercised where possible and desirable by:

- (1) Meetings, both formal and informal, of delegates to the meetings of NAPARC and the ICRC and on other occasions that may arise.
- (2) Mutual labours as members of NAPARC and the ICRC in the discharge of the purposes of the council/conference.
- (3) Welcome of fraternal observers at major assemblies.
- (4) Other duties as directed by general synod.

The Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER) shall periodically review our ecumenical relationships to ensure we are honouring our commitments to each other. Furthermore, the CER may make recommendations, without prejudice, to General Synod regarding the optimal placement of federations within these categories.

Rule 2

In circumstances where no Ecclesiastical Fellowship (Rule 1, Level 1) exists, churches may engage in ecumenical relationships with other local churches of Reformed confession as per CO art. 50, in accordance with the following protocols:

- (1) Pulpit fellowship may occur with the concurring advice of classis.
- (2) Reception of members at the Lord's supper according to local regulations.
- (3) Reception of members into the local congregation according to local regulations.
- (4) Churches shall give an account of their ecumenical activities to their respective classis.