

SYNODICAL SERVICES I

Chair: Rev. Peter Jonker
Reporter: Rev. Drew Sweetman

I. Council of Delegates

A. Materials

1. Council of Delegates Report, Section II, pp. 23-26
2. Council of Delegates Report, Section IV. A, including Appendix A, pp. 29-30; 42-51
3. Council of Delegates Report, Section IV. B, including Appendix B, pp. 30; 52-56
4. Council of Delegates Report, Section IV. J, pp. 36-37
5. Council of Delegates Report, Section IV. K, p. 37
6. Council of Delegates Supplement Report, Section I. A-B
7. Council of Delegates Supplement Report, Section III. D

B. *Privilege of the floor*: Michael L. Ten Haken, chair of the Council of Delegates; Greta Luimes, vice chair of the Council of Delegates; Zachary J. King, general secretary; and members of the executive staff as needed when matters pertaining to the Council of Delegates are discussed.

C. Recommendations

1. That synod express gratitude to Matthew Ackerman, Jesus Bayona, Debbie Karambowich, Michael Koetje, William Koopmans, Thea Leunk, Greta Luimes, Jessica Maddox, Amy Nydam, Anthony Selvaggio, and Arie Vander Zouwen for their faithful service and significant contributions to the denomination during their tenure on the Council of Delegates.
2. That synod approve the updates to the Council of Delegates Governance Handbook as presented in Appendix A.
3. That synod approve the updates to the Council of Delegates Governance Handbook as presented in Appendix G of the Council of Delegates Supplement (p. 33).
4. That synod instruct the Council of Delegates to review the Dignity Team Charter, addressing the following concerns:
 - a. the scope of their role as a care provider (see language from *Agenda for Synod 2021*, p. 64-65);
 - b. the roles of local assemblies (applying Matthew 18 principles) in pastoral engagement.

Ground: These concerns are named in the report approved by the COD (*Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council of Delegates 2021*, p. 636-637) but not included in the Charter.

5. That synod approve the updates to the Rules for Synodical Procedure as presented in Appendix B and instruct the general secretary to arrange a further review of this document with any proposed updates to be presented to Synod 2026 following input from the COD.

Grounds:

- a. The updates in Appendix B reflect the implications of decisions that synods have made in recent years, such as the virtual convening session of synod and additional technological changes in the ways synod conducts its business.

- b. Synod has granted the Office of General Secretary the authority to review and clarify the use of terms such as agency, board, office, and ministry in order to provide clarity about the roles of such entities (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 930).
- c. The need for a more thorough review of this document has been identified with regard to shifts in the nature of study committees, the role of the convening church of synod, the duties of officers, and issues of consistency between the Rules for Synodical Procedure and other governance documents, and staff can work on the review in the coming year to suggest necessary changes for review by the COD and approval by synod.

II. Response to Overtures 1 & 2: Permit Transfer of Grace Community Chapel, Teaneck, New Jersey, from Classis Hackensack to Classis Hudson

A. Materials

- 1. Overture 1, p. 337
- 2. Overture 2, pp. 337-338

B. Recommendations

- 1. That synod permit the transfer of Grace Community Chapel of Teaneck, NJ from Classis Hackensack to Classis Hudson, noting that both Cornerstone Church of Queens, NY and King's Covenant Church of Edison, NJ as emerging congregations under the supervision of Grace Community Chapel, will also transfer from Classis Hackensack to Classis Hudson.
- 2. That this be synod's response to Overtures 1 and 2.

III. Response to Overture 3: Amend Church Order to Prohibit Concealed Handguns at All Ecclesiastical Assemblies

A. Materials

Overture 3, pp. 338-339

B. Recommendation

That synod not accede to Overture 3.

Grounds:

- a. The work of the assemblies is limited to ecclesiastical matters (CO Art. 28). "Synod has declared that political, social, and economic questions are ecclesiastical matters only when doctrinal and ethical issues of sufficient magnitude are involved as commonly understood according to the Word of God and the confessional standards..." (Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government p. 111)
- b. The right to have or not to have "concealed weapons" is determined by the laws of the jurisdiction in which the church assembly is gathering. If this is a concern at the local level then the local Council or Classis can speak into it.