

GENERAL SYNOD
REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

2024 Journal of Actions
Meeting 5
Friday evening - June 14, 2024
Arizona Ballroom

CALL TO ORDER

The president called to order the fifth meeting of the General Synod at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, June 14, 2024. The Rev. Florence Dekker, minister delegate from the Classis of Ontario, offered prayer.

MISSIONARY VIDEO

Delegates viewed a brief video highlighting the work of Yakuv Gurung, RCA missionary.

REPORT OF THE RESTRUCTURING TEAM

The president called upon the members of the restructuring team, Rev. Stephen Shaffer, moderator of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance, Rev. Christopher Jacobsen, minister delegate from the Classis of Rochester and moderator of the Commission on Church Order, and Rev. Howard Moths, restructuring team resource person from the Commission on Church Order, to present the report of the restructuring team (GS Workbook pp. 104-146). Rev. Gregory Brower and Michelle Chahine (members of the restructuring team) and Revs. Shaffer, Jacobsen, and Moths addressed the synod.

CO 24-4 was presented to the house.

The president called upon the Rev. Stephen Shaffer to provide the advice of the Advisory Committee. The advice of the Advisory Committee was to adopt CO 24-4 (Report of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance, p.2).

VOTED: To adopt CO 24-4 (GS Workbook p. 247) (yes 149, no 25).

REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH ORDER AND GOVERNANCE

The president called upon the Rev. Shaffer, moderator of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance, to present the committee's report (Report of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance). Rev. Shaffer addressed the Synod.

OG 24-1 was presented to the house. It reads as follows:

OG 24-1

To direct the Commission on Church Order, in consultation with the Commission on Race and Ethnicity and the Commission for Women, to propose how the General Synod Commission on Judicial Business will include sufficient diversity and to present recommendations to General Synod 2025. (ADOPTED)

Reasons:

1. Each classis (or middle assembly) will send one delegate to make up the Commission on Judicial Business without reference to the composition of the commission. This could result in a commission that lacks diversity.
2. Diverse perspectives are required for fairness, cultural understanding, wisdom, and justice, especially if the parties are members of an underrepresented group.
3. The General Synod Commission on Judicial Business is authoritative. No appeal can be made on its decisions.
4. The committee does not want to infringe on the rights and authority of the classis (or middle assembly) as it determines nominees. The committee also wants to assure equitable representation on the General Synod Commission on Judicial Business.

VOTED: To adopt OG 24-1 (Report of the Advisory on Church Order and Governance, p.2) (yes 154, no 21).

RF 24-1 was presented to the house.

The president called upon the Rev. Shaffer to provide the advice of the Advisory Committee. The advice of the Advisory Committee was to adopt RF 24-1 (Report of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance, p. 1).

A motion was made and supported from the floor as follows (additions are double-underlined; deletions are stricken):

Replace every reference to versions of the word “classis” with “middle assembly” as follows:

classis	is replaced with	middle assembly
classis’	is replaced with	middle assembly’s
s		
classes	is replaced with	middle assemblies
classes’	is replaced with	middle assemblies’

and further, to adopt

two instances of the following amendment to the Bylaws of the General Synod (Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, Sections 1b and c [2023 ed., p. 108]):

“...regular ~~classical~~ delegates from the middle assemblies...”

and further, to adopt the following addition to the BCO, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 1 (addition is underlined; existing text would become Section 1):

(new) Sec. 2. A middle assembly may retain its designation as a classis or a regional or particular synod for its legal documents; and further, to present relevant names to replace “Consistory” and “General Synod” by General Synod 2026.

VOTED: To not adopt the amendment to RF 24-1 (yes 29, no 151).

RF 24-1 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 (yes 149, no 25).

VOTED: To adopt RF 24-1 (GS Workbook p. 115) (yes 154, no 25).

RF 24-2 was presented to the house.

VOTED: To adopt RF 24-2 (GS Workbook p. 123) (yes 166, no 13).

REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON OVERTURES AND NEW BUSINESS

In response to Overture 5 (Workbook p. 159) ONB 24-3 was presented to the house (Report of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, p. 4). It reads as follows:

ONB 24-3 To deny Overture 5. (ADOPTED)

Reason:

1. This proposed amendment doesn't reflect the compelling motivation

articulated by the restructuring team to keep the size of General Synod smaller. This proposal would increase the number of voting delegates at General Synod even higher than our current numbers, and the financial burden would be high.

VOTED: To adopt ONB 24-3 (yes 144, no 30).

RF 24-3 was presented to the house.

VOTED: To adopt RF 24-3 (GS Workbook p. 128) (yes 165, no 16).

RF 24-4 was presented to the house.

A motion was made and supported from the floor as follows (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):

“... once every ~~three~~ two years, ...”

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

VOTED: To cease debate (yes 138, no 43).

VOTED: To not adopt the amendment to RF 24-4 (yes 71, no 107).

RF 24-4 in its original form was again before the house.

A motion was made from the floor to change the date of receipt of the report from 2025 to 2024. The president ruled the motion out of order.

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

VOTED: To cease debate (yes 147, no 26).

VOTED: To adopt RF 24-4 (GS Workbook p. 130) (yes 125, no 51).

RECESS

The president declared the General Synod recessed at 8:52 p.m., following prayer by the Ms. Amanda Bruehl, seminarian seminar participant.