

RULES OF PROCEDURE

CLASSIS BRITISH COLUMBIA NORTH-WEST

of the

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA



Our Mission

Classis BCNW exists to encourage, equip, and empower congregations and ministries to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and seek first God's Kingdom.

The Values that Shape our Work, Witness, and Life Together

- **Prayerful Dependence on God:** Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we trust God to lead and provide for us as we engage in ministry together.
- **Authentic Community:** Intentionally sharing life and story, we build each other up and encourage one another to live lives worthy of the calling we've received.
- **Disciples Making New Disciples:** Recognizing that the church's main calling is to make disciples of Jesus, we encourage one another, our congregations, and the ministries we represent to be faithful to God's mission and creative in living it out
- **Leadership Development:** Through funding, training and support, we develop, commission, and equip new and existing leaders.
- **Covenantal Relationships:** Committing ourselves to each other as God has committed himself to us, we support the work of classis and the ministry of the CRCNA.

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I. CONVENING AND CONSTITUTION OF CLASSIS

- A. Classis shall convene and be constituted:
1. As prescribed by the Church Order and these Rules of Procedure.
 2. Normally twice a year on a Tuesday and Wednesday:
 - a. March: beginning the first Tuesday of the month.
 - b. October: beginning the Tuesday eight days after Thanksgiving.
 3. In extraordinary meetings convened:
 - a. Upon the decision of classis.
 - b. Upon the decision of classis in *Classis Contracta (special meeting of classis)* with a quorum of half the churches of classis plus one. (*Acts of Synod 2000, p. 668*)
 - c. Upon the request of a church to the Classical Interim Committee for the purpose of conducting a *Colloquium Doctum (doctrinal conversation)* or the examination of its minister-elect.
 - d. Upon the request of at least three churches to the Classical Interim Committee.
- B. Classis Meeting:
1. Classis shall consist of two delegates from each organized church, usually one minister or commissioned pastor, and one elder or deacon. Churches shall still send two delegates when a church does not have a minister or commissioned pastor, or such person is unable to attend.
 2. All meetings of classis shall be open to office bearers of the churches within classis. They shall have the right of the floor upon the permission of the assembly. The public may attend the meeting unless classis decides to meet in executive session.
 3. Up to two ordained members from emerging churches may be seated as extra delegates of their “mother” (supervising) churches. Unordained members may attend the meetings of classis, and may be given the privilege of the floor, but do not have the right to vote. (CO 40-a, Supplement b.).
 4. Classical delegates will be reimbursed for travel and loss of wages up to the amount determined by classis and at their request. Airline transportation should be used for long-distance travel; classis will pay the cost for seat selection. If a traveler elects to drive for long-distance travel, the mileage/car rental reimbursement should not exceed the average cost of an airplane ticket to that destination. Please consider car rental and carpooling to reduce cost.
- C. Recording of Online Meetings
1. As a general rule, online meetings will not be recorded. The only exception is for minute-taking purposes by the stated clerk. Any such recordings will be deleted as soon as the minutes are complete, and will not be shared with anyone.
 2. Candidate examination videos taken before the actual classis meeting will be shared with delegates, synodical deputies, and guests only from a secure platform, and will be deleted as soon as the examination is complete.

II. MATTERS LEGALLY BEFORE CLASSIS

- A. Overtures, Communications, and Appeals
1. Overtures
 - a. An overture is a formal written proposal sent to an assembly requesting adoption or

amendment of a policy or other legislative action by the assembly. (*Rules for Synodical Procedure, V. A. 2*)

b. See Appendix A for regulations and formatting guidelines for overtures.

2. Communications

a. A communication is a document presenting information, ideas, thoughts, opinions, complaints, or objections for consideration of the assemblies. A communication is distinguished from an overture in that an overture proposes specific action, and a communication does not. One type of communication is a protest, which expresses a complaint or objection to a decision or course of action followed by an assembly. An assembly is not required to take any action with respect to a communication. (*Rules for Synodical Procedure, V. A.3*)

b. Classis must note clear grounds when changing a church's request for a communication to synod to an overture to synod. (*Classis BCNW: Minutes March 3 & 4, 2020*)

3. Appeals:

a. An appeal is a procedure by which a decision or action of an assembly, board, agency, or committee is brought to the appropriate assembly for review in the light of existing policies and standards of the church. (*Rules for Synodical Procedure, V. A.1*)

b. Individual members presenting appeals to classis shall submit copies of such appeals to their council in sufficient time for their consideration.

4. General Guidelines:

a. A council may send an overture or communication to classis; classis may send an overture or communication to synod. Individual members of churches may only send an overture or communication to classis or synod after first sending an overture or communication to council and classis. A council may only send an overture or communication to synod after first sending an overture or communication to classis. Only when overtures or communications are not acceded to may individuals and councils send overtures or communications to a higher assembly.

b. Councils or individuals presenting overtures, communications, or appeals to classis shall send a copy to the stated clerk at least seven weeks before classis convenes.

c. In order for an overture, communication, or appeal from a church to be properly before classis, the church sending the request must have delegates at the meeting where the matter is being discussed.

d. Any delegate from the church sending an overture, communication, or appeal to classis has the privilege of the floor, can participate in discussion, and has the privilege of voting on the matter.

e. Any individual who is not a delegate, and who brings an overture, communication, or appeal to classis after their church council rejects it, may be granted the privilege of the floor by the chair, at the chair's discretion.

B. Reports:

1. Classical committees, and delegates to various denominational boards and committees, shall forward their reports to the stated clerk seven weeks before the meeting of classis for inclusion in the agenda. If the timing of the board meeting does not allow these delegates to follow this procedure, they shall present written reports for all Classical delegates at the beginning of the meeting they are to present to.

Ordinarily, reports shall not be read on the floor of classis.

2. Ministry Reporting:
 - a. All classical ministries, teams, and standing committees shall report to each classis meeting.
 - b. All denominational boards and ministry representatives shall verbally report to classis on a rotating schedule, approximately every 2 to 3 years. They may, however, report to each classis agenda by way of a written report, if needed. CIC shall provide a rotation schedule for reporting from these Ministries and Boards.
 - c. All non-denominational ministries shall not normally report to classis except in written form. These ministries are encouraged to report directly to the churches.

C. Matters Presented on the Credentials:

When submitting their Classical Credentials churches may request advice or help from classis with regards to a ministry issue. These issues are to be reviewed by the credentials committee and reported to each classis meeting. At a minimum of one meeting annually sufficient time shall be allocated to discuss at least one ministry issue that the classis considers to be especially important.

D. Exception:

Materials not appearing on the agenda or credentials may be taken up by special decision of classis.

III. CLASSIS OFFICERS AND FUNCTIONARIES

A. Classis shall appoint:

1. For each of its sessions, ministers or commissioned pastors to serve by rotation as:
 - a. President, Vice-president, and Recording Clerk.
 - b. Each minister, or commissioned pastor, shall successively serve as Vice-president, President, and Recording Clerk according to the alphabetical order of the churches they serve.
2. A Stated Clerk and an alternate:
 - a. These shall serve for a three-year term, and will be eligible for additional terms.
 - b. Classis shall remunerate the Stated Clerk and the Classical Treasurer for their services, which remuneration shall be reviewed annually. Amounts will normally be increased according to B.C.'s Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA).
3. A Classical Treasurer and an alternate:
 - a. These shall serve for a three-year term, and will be eligible for additional terms.
 - b. Classis shall remunerate the Stated Clerk and the Classical Treasurer for their services, which remuneration shall be reviewed annually. Amounts will normally be increased according to B.C.'s Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA).
4. A qualified person to serve as Auditor:
 - a. Upon the recommendation of the Classical Interim Committee.
 - b. The auditor shall serve a two-year term and be eligible for additional terms.
5. Church Visitors:
 - a. Shall ordinarily be constituted by one minister of the Word, or commissioned pastor, plus an additional office-bearer of each church.
 - b. In cases of need, the CIC may appoint a team of two or three visitors constituted from any church in classis.

6. Church Counselors: to serve churches without a lead pastor according to the rules of synod.
- B. All classical functionaries and committee members shall ordinarily be elected and appointed at the March meeting. (See VI.A.1.-8. for general provisions for committees)

IV. THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

- A. The President:
1. Shall assume the chairmanship of classis only for the duration of its meeting.
 2. Shall call for the credentials of the delegates, and have all first-time delegates sign the *Covenant for Office bearers*.
 3. Shall welcome fraternal delegates and/or guests to classis, respond to greetings received or appoint delegates of classis for this purpose.
 4. Shall not preside in any matter that concerns the chair or the church the chair serves.
- B. The Vice-President:
1. Shall render all possible assistance to the President.
 2. Shall conclude the meeting of classis with devotions.
- C. The Recording Clerk:
1. Shall record in the concept minutes the proceedings of the meeting of classis.
 2. Shall read the concept minutes only at the request of the chair. (*Article 3.2, October 2014*)

V. THE DUTIES OF OTHER CLASSICAL FUNCTIONARIES

- A. The Stated Clerk:
1. Shall convene the meetings of classis ...
 - a. By notifying the churches of classis, the reporters of its committees, and its denominational board delegates approx. 14 weeks prior to the date of the meeting. (*Classis Minutes, March 2002, p. 368, art.14.2*)
 - b. By preparing and sending the agenda to the councils, and others as needed, six weeks before classis meets.
 2. Shall serve as the custodian of the seal, records, files and archives of classis.
 3. Shall produce minutes from the concept minutes, and send them to each council and others as needed.
 4. Shall keep an up-to-date record of the committees of classis and the terms of office of all classical functionaries.
 5. Shall conduct the correspondence of classis.
 6. Shall convene and meet with the Classical Interim Committee to deal with all matters related to classis during the interim between its sessions.
- B. The Classical Treasurer:
1. Shall receive and disburse the Ministry Shares approved by classis and synod.
 2. Shall keep an accurate record of all funds received and disbursed and shall issue receipts for monies received.
 3. Shall report to each classis meeting, and give an annual report to the March

- meeting.
4. Shall normally disburse funds at least 2 times during the fiscal year, in the months of July and January.
 5. Shall have ex-officio privilege of the floor in the financial matters of classis.
- C. The Classical Accountant:
1. Shall conduct an annual Notice to Reader Review of the work of the Classical Treasurer, and an annual Summary of the Efficacy of Internal Controls.
 2. Shall submit a written report for the Classical Interim Committee to review and determine if anything needs to be brought to classis.
- D. Church Visitors:
1. Shall visit the churches biennially according to the schedule prepared by the CIC.
 2. Shall present a written report of their work to classis in the fall meeting immediately following each visit. Unless there are matters of concern in the report, the reports need not be read on the floor of classis.
 3. Shall distribute these reports as follows:
 - a. Send one copy to the church visited prior to reporting to classis.
 - b. Place one copy in each church file folder.
 - c. Send an electronic copy to the stated clerk who has to send a copy to the Historical Committee of CRC. *(Note: see minutes of Mar '86 p.5, art.5.1.A.3.c)*
- E. Church Counselors:
1. Shall report on their work with churches without a lead pastor to classis annually.
 2. Shall present a written report to classis upon completing their assignment.

VI. COMMITTEES/TEAMS

- A. General Provisions:
1. Classis is or may be served by 3 types of committees or teams:
 - a. Standing committees/teams serve permanently between the meetings of classis.
 - b. Advisory committees/teams serve as appointed by the CIC upon distribution of the agenda through the duration of the subsequent meeting of classis.
 - c. Ad hoc committees/teams, e.g. a study committee, serve between the meetings of classis.
 2. To legitimately function all such committees/teams shall be appointed by classis.
 3. Committee/team members shall be members in good standing of a church in Classis British Columbia North-West.
 4. Members of a standing committee/team shall be elected for a 3-year term (*see III.B.*), and shall be eligible for additional terms.
 5. Ordinarily committees/teams shall submit nominations for each vacancy that occurs.
 6. Alternate members are no longer needed. (*see Min 9/08; p484; art. 3.15, Rev. 1*)
 7. Committees/teams are servants of classis and shall take action only within their mandate.
 8. Each committee/team, except the SFC (*see VI.B.2.a.6*), shall submit a written or electronic report of its actions and recommendations in time for the agenda of each classis meeting.

B. Standing Committees/Teams:

1. Classical Interim Committee (CIC):

a. Mandate: The Committee shall ...

- 1) Act for classis between meetings in matters that require immediate action.
- 2) Ensure that the provisions of the Church Order and classis' Rules of Procedure are adhered to.
- 3) Be responsible for church visitors, church counselors, classical examinations, licensure of exhorters, financial management, abuse response, other teams. I.e., Classical Ministries Committee, Ministry to Seafarers Committee, Student Fund Committee, and diaconal related ministries.
- 4) Ensure that communication, coordination, collaboration, encouragement and vision for classis be maintained through direct consultation with all existing teams requiring additional expertise and input at a broader level.
- 5) Will automatically grant licenses to officiate at weddings only to ordained ministers and commissioned pastors. All un-ordained ministry staff requests for licenses be reviewed by CIC and only be granted with approval and supervision of local council. (*Article 3.2 October 2014*)

b. Membership shall consist of six members: The Chairperson, the stated clerk, the Classical Treasurer, the chair of the Student Fund Committee, the elected alternate stated clerk, one at-large member, and the Safe Church Team Coordinator in an ex-officio capacity. An attempt should be made to have Membership include representatives from the Northern, the Island and the Lower Mainland churches.

c. Duties of the Chair and the Clerk

1) The Chairperson shall:

- Chair the CIC meetings.
- Provide support, when requested by the clerk, in the carrying out of the clerk's duties.
- Have the privilege of the floor of classis to speak in defense of CIC decisions, if needed.
- Report to classis on behalf of the CIC.

2) The Clerk shall:

- Convene the CIC meetings.
- Prepare the agenda and minutes of CIC meetings.
- Deal with all matters related to classis and the CIC between their sessions.
- Have the privilege of the floor of classis to speak in defense of CIC decisions, if needed.

3) Relationship between the Chair and the Clerk

Each are independent officers of classis and neither sits in authority over the other in their stated duties. A good working relationship is encouraged, however, with interaction and discussion taking place regarding the ongoing work of classis and as new items come forward. (*Article VI,C,6, October 2018*)

2. Classical Ministries Committee (CMC)

a. Mandate: The committee shall...

- 1) Steward the ministry share resources of classis, thereby ensuring:
 - a) Funding is sustainable into the future.
 - b) Funding is there to birth new ministries as the Holy Spirits prompts within the churches in our classis.

- 2) Provide oversight to the ministries classis supports by:
 - a) Reviewing ministries every three years via the Partnership Requests.
 - b) Receiving the regular minutes of each committee or board via the stated clerk.
 - c) Ensuring each ministry reports to classis at least annually.
 - 3) Be the first step in approving new ministry requests, including new initiatives by churches approaching classis for funding assistance. The CMC will bring recommendations regarding new ministries to the CIC and classis for approval and ratification.
 - 4) Approve (and assist in preparing, if needed) Partnership Requests with new and existing ministries, as per the “Classis BCNW Funding Principles” document, Appendix C.
 - 5) Receive renewed Partnership Requests every three years and approve a new funding recommendation (if applicable), as per the “Classis BCNW Funding Principles” document, Appendix C.
 - 6) Propose a classical ministry share for each ministry. Classis entrusts the CMC to make decisions, including ministry share requests, after consultation with the CIC. These will then be ratified by classis, rather than deciding the requests at a regular classis meeting. Note: Ministries can appeal their allocation directly to classis if they do not agree with the recommendation of the CMC.
 - 7) Submit a written report of its actions and recommendations in time for the agenda of the fall classis meeting.
- b. Membership shall consist of five members: The Chair, the Secretary, the Classical Treasurer, the stated clerk, and one at-large member. Membership terms are to be staggered, regional representation is to be a priority, and any conflict of interest is to be avoided. (*Classis Minutes, March 2020, 5.5.4.*)
3. Student Fund Committee (SFC):

Note: SFC is distinct from the bi-classis CMLT with BCSE, although the SFC members from BCNW are automatically members of the bi-classis CMLT.

 - a. Mandate: The Committee shall ...
 - 1) Encourage and receive applications for aid from this Fund from students who intend to study for the Christian Reformed Ministry at synodically accepted colleges and seminaries. Students must ordinarily be from CRC churches within Classis B.C.N.W to receive funding / grants.
 - 2) Process all applications in accordance with SFC rules and conditions, and present them for approval to classis.
 - 3) Propose a classical Ministry Share and encourage special gifts for this Fund.
 - 4) Require students who have received aid but do not enter the Christian Reformed Ministry to repay the aid received.
 - 5) Require those who leave the Christian Reformed Ministry within five years of ordination to pay back proportionally their aid at the discretion of classis.
 - 6) Submit a written report of its actions and recommendations at least once each year in time for the agenda of the fall classis meeting.
 - b. Membership shall consist of three members (*Rev.1*). These members shall also serve on the bi-classis CMLT.
 - c. Classis entrusts the SFC to make decisions, including funding requests, after

consultation with the CIC, to be ratified by Classis rather than deciding their requests at regular Classis meeting. *(March 2014 Article 3.5)*

4. Classis Ministry Leadership Team (CMLT):
As part of the CRC's revised process for equipping persons to enter ordained Ministry of the Word in the CRC, the Classis Ministry Leadership Team oversees this process at a classis level.
 - a. Mandate: The Committee shall...
 - 1) Advise and provide information to councils, classis and the LDN or anyone else interested in ordained ministry on the candidacy process.
 - 2) Encourage local churches to be pro-active in identifying possible candidates for CRC ministry, especially as young people search out God's will for their vocation in life or as older persons consider a change of calling toward ministry vocations.
 - 3) Oversee the application for and movement through the candidacy process for potential candidates for ministry and to present the appropriate progress reports and recommendations to classis and the denominational Candidacy Committee (CC) when they are needed.
 - 4) Submit a written report and recommendations, including financial recommendations, to classis in time to be included in the agenda of each classis meeting
 - b. Membership shall consist of six members: three members from Classis BCNW (these members shall also serve on the SFC), and three members from Classis BCSE.

5. Ministry to Seafarers Committee (MSC):
 - a. Mandate: The Committee shall...
 - a. Submit to classis nominations for each vacancy that occurs.
 - b. Be responsible for the Ministry to Seafarers on behalf of both classes.
 - c. Supervise the work of the Chaplain.
 - d. Review the job description of the Chaplain annually.
 - e. Prepare a budget and submit it to both classes for approval.
 - f. Report to both classes.
 - b. Membership shall consist of the Chaplain and 6 members who have shown interest in and commitment to the work among seafaring people. Classes BCNW and BCSE shall have equal representation, and each classis may *(Rev. 1)* appoint an alternate.

6. Association for the Christian Reformed Campus Ministry in British Columbia:
 - a. Mandate is given in the constitution and bylaws of the association.
 - b. Membership: The directors are to be nominated by the association and appointed by classis. The number of directors is spelled out in the constitution and bylaws of the association.

7. Safe Church Team (SCT):
The mandate for the SCT is being re-written in consultation with the SCT coordinator Faye Martin and our classis SCT rep. Currently the CIC is acting as the executive board for the SCT as there is no team in place.
Once reps from each church are identified and trained, they will become the board of

the SCT and out of that group they will elect their own executive to oversee the work of the SCT and coordinator. Once that is done, a new mandate for our ROP can be written, which may well include the old mandate with re-writes, updates and revisions.

8. Nominations Committee:
 - a. Mandate: The Committee shall ...
 - 1) Solicit the churches and committees/teams for nominees to serve in the various classical and denominational functions. The main functions to be filled are the following: classical committees/teams and standing committees, Council of Delegates (COD) of the CRCNA, Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, Synodical Deputy, and classical delegates to synod.
 - 2) Allow for additional nominations from the floor of classis. Nominations from the floor must have the approval of the person being nominated.
 - 3) Propose these nominees to classis by normally presenting a printed ballot listing all the nominees for the vacancies. Voice votes, with delegates' approval, are acceptable.
 - b. Membership shall consist of members from the CIC (*Rev. 1*).
- C. Advisory Committees
1. General Guidelines:
 - a. Advisory committees shall serve in order to facilitate the work of classis. They exist simply to give advice to the classical assembly.
 - b. The stated clerk shall propose committee members and the Classical Interim Committee shall appoint them.
 - c. Advisory committees shall present their recommendations as motions, which need to be seconded from the floor.
 2. Overtures and Communications:
 - a. The presentation of the report of the Overture/Communication Advisory Committee takes precedence over the presentation of the overture or communication when being brought to the floor. After the advisory committee reports, the church presenting the overture or communication will be given an opportunity to speak and/or rebut.
 - b. If the motion of the Overture/Communication Advisory Committee is substantially different from an overture or communication's recommendations, the recommendations of the advisory committee shall take precedence. (Note: this is to allow classis to have one motion on the table rather than competing motions if multiple overtures are received on the same topic.)
 - c. Process:
 - 1) The Overture/Communication Advisory Committee presents their report and puts their motion on the floor.
 - 2) Before the motion is seconded, the church or individual (*see ROP, II.A.4.c&d.*) is then granted an opportunity to respond.
 - 3) The chair asks for a second to the motion from the Overture/Communication Advisory Committee and debate / discussion can commence.

- d. Classis may dismiss the recommendation(s) of the Overture/Communication Advisory Committee and address the overture or communication without advice, or recommit the matter to the advisory committee for further work, or simply table the whole matter. Classis' decision is final until synod rules otherwise, or classis decides to revisit the matter.
 - e. If an overture or communication is submitted that addresses a confessional issue, or a matter the Overture/Communication Advisory Committee deems weighty, the committee shall submit their written recommendation to the stated clerk five weeks before the time classis meets to give time to all councils and delegates to weigh both the overture/communication and the advisory committee response before the classis meeting.
 - f. The classis agenda is to be arranged in such a way as to allow overture/communication committee matters to be dealt with earlier in the meeting, in order to provide additional time or flexibility that may be required for a substantive issue and its need for careful deliberation. (*Classis BCNW: Minutes March 3 & 4, 2020*)
 - g. See Appendix B for regulations specifically guiding the Overture/Communication Advisory Committee.
3. Study Committee Reports:
- a. The report of a study or task force takes precedence over the report of the advisory committee when being brought to the floor.
 - b. If the motion of the advisory committee is substantially different from a study committee's recommendations, the recommendations of the study committee report shall take precedence.
- D. Ad Hoc / Study Committees:
- 1. Ad hoc or study committees shall serve for a time and purpose as specified by classis and shall report as instructed by classis.
 - 2. Classis may appoint ad hoc or study committees as the need arises.

VII. EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES

- A. As soon as a candidate has accepted a call, the council shall notify the stated clerk.
- B. When a candidate accepts a call, the stated clerk shall request and receive from him:
 - 1. A copy of the Letter of Call and
 - 2. A copy of the letter of acceptance.
- C. The Classical Interim Committee shall make arrangements for the examination, which shall be conducted according to the rules of synod.
- D. Recognizing the significance of the classical exam to both the examinee and classis:
 - 1. When meeting in person: we will continue our current procedure of conducting candidate examinations in-person. Exceptions to this rule will be determined by the CIC and the classis executive (e.g., lengthy agenda, more than one exam, etc.).
 - 2. When meeting on Zoom: we will pre-record the practica and biblical/theological portions of the exam.
 - 3. When meeting in contracta: we will maintain a Zoom component for those outside the candidate's region, and pre-record the practica and biblical/theological portions of the exam.

VIII. LICENSURE TO EXHORT

- A. A licensure to exhort within the bounds of Classis BCNW shall be normally be granted for three years, unless classis indicates otherwise.
- B. Applications for the renewal of a license shall be in writing and shall include:
 - 1. A brief summary of where and when the exhorter has preached in the past three years, and his/her plans for the next three.
 - 2. A recommendation from the church council that holds the exhorter's membership.

IX. DELEGATES TO SYNOD

- A. Classis shall elect at its fall meeting four delegates and their alternates to the annual synod.
 - 1. The Minister delegate and their alternate are appointed by way of rotation for Ministers of the Word serving the local congregation, as well as serving in specialized ministry, who have served the longest within the classis and have not been delegated to a synod meeting. The alternate for this position would be the following year name on the rotation list.
 - 2. The elder delegate is selected by vote from a list of elder nominees presented to classis for delegation to synod.
 - 3. The deacon delegate is selected by vote from a list of deacon nominees presented to classis for delegation to synod.
 - 4. The fourth delegate and their alternate are selected by vote from a list of nominees from any of the three offices presented to classis for delegation to synod. This would include all ordained ministers within Classis BCNW and all elder and deacon nominees left over from the first round of elections. (*Classis BCNW: Minutes March 1st & 2nd, 2016*)
 - 5. The elder and deacon not elected as the fourth delegate or the alternate, and who received the next highest number of votes in the elder and deacon delegate vote, will become the alternate elder and deacon delegate.
- B. Elders and/or deacons delegated to synod can be reimbursed for loss of wages up to the amount determined by classis. Requests for reimbursement must be made to the stated clerk.

X. RULES OF ORDER

In our ecclesiastical assemblies, "ecclesiastical matters only shall be transacted and that in an ecclesiastical manner," as Article 28 of our Church Order stipulates. Our classis meetings should therefore not be bound to observe detailed parliamentary rules. These may be proper in other gatherings, but they do not fit into the pattern of ecclesiastical assemblies, which demand a large measure of freedom in discussion and action. However, a few general rules of order may serve a good purpose.

- A. Closed Sessions of Classis (Executive Session):
 - 1. Executive session means a session of classis at which only the delegates, other ordained office bearers of Classis BCNW, and members of the CIC are present. Classis shall not exercise the right to go into executive session except in unusual or delicate situations.

2. Strict executive session means only the delegates shall be present. Classis retains the right to go into strict executive session whenever it judges such a course is dictated by due regard for personal honor or the welfare of the church in very unusual situations.
 3. The stated clerk, as an elected officer of classis, bound by the Covenant of Office Bearers, remains in attendance at either executive session even though he or she may not be a current sitting office bearer.
- B. A Main Motion:
This is a motion that presents a certain subject to classis for its consideration or action.
1. A main motion is acceptable under the following conditions:
 - a. If the mover has been recognized by the President.
 - b. If it is seconded by a member of classis.
 - c. If the motion has been recognized as acceptable by the President.
 - d. If, at the request of the President, the motion has been presented in written form.
 2. A main motion is not acceptable under the following conditions:
 - a. If it conflicts with the Church Order or is contrary to Scripture as interpreted in our Forms of Unity.
 - b. If another motion is before classis or if it conflicts with any decision already made by classis.
 - c. If it is verbally or substantially the same as a motion already rejected by classis or if it interferes with the freedom of action by classis in a matter that was previously introduced but of which no disposal was made.
- C. 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.
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.
 2. A motion to amend an amendment is not a proper motion if it nullifies the main motion or is not germane to it.
 3. A motion to amend is permissible and is called a secondary motion. (Only one motion to amend a pending amendment is in order at one time.)
- D. A Motion to Defer, Table, or Withhold Action:
1. When classis deems it advisable, it may table a motion temporarily. Tabling a motion implies that the assembly will resume consideration of the motion at a later hour or date.
 2. If a matter has been deferred to a definite time, and classis is at that time busy with an undecided question, classis need not be disturbed or interrupted in its work by the consideration of postponed matters, if this matter can wait until the question before classis has been disposed of.
 3. If classis prefers not to take action regarding a matter, it may adopt a motion to withhold action.
- E. Objection to a Ruling of the President:
If any member is not satisfied with the ruling of the President, the matter is referred to classis for decision, with the Vice-President presiding over the challenge to the chair.

F. Right of Protest:

1. It is the right of any member to protest against any decision of classis. Protests should be registered immediately, or during the session in which the matter concerned was acted upon. Protests must be registered individually and not in groups.
2. 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.

G. Call for a Division of the Question:

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

H. Procedural Inquiry:

Any member of classis may request advice of the President as to how to accomplish a purpose for which he does not know the proper means.

I. Motion to Bring Matters Once Decided Again Before Classis:

If any members of classis for weighty reasons desires reconsideration of a matter once decided, the following course may be pursued:

1. A motion may be offered to reconsider the matter. The purpose of this motion is to propose a new discussion and a new vote. (The motion must be made by one who voted with the prevailing side.)

A motion may be made to rescind a previous decision. The purpose of this motion is to annul or reverse such a previous decision. (Rescinding applies to decisions taken by the classis in session; it does not apply to decisions taken by previous classes. A succeeding classis may alter the stand of a previous classis, or it may reach a conclusion which is at variance with a conclusion reached by an earlier classis. In such cases the most recent decision invalidates all previous decisions in conflict with it.)

J. Discussion:

1. A speaker to obtain the floor must be recognized by the President.
2. If a member having the floor should fail to adhere to the point under discussion or should become unnecessarily lengthy in his/her remarks, the President shall call his/her attention to these faults and insist on pointedness and brevity.
3. If any member has spoken twice on a pending issue, others who have not yet spoken twice shall ordinarily be given priority by the President.
4. When the President believes that a motion under consideration has been debated sufficiently, he may propose cessation of debate. If a majority of classis sustains this proposal, discussion shall cease and the vote shall be taken.
5. Whenever any member of classis deems a matter to have been debated sufficiently, the member may move to close the discussion. Those who call for the question shall be recognized in the same manner as others who gain the floor of classis, i.e. by taking their turn on the list of those who have requested the privilege of the floor. The vote on the motion to cease debate shall be taken at once. Should a majority be in favor of ceasing debate, the vote on the matter before classis shall be taken only after recognizing those who had previously requested the floor.

K. Voting:

The various methods of voting are:

1. By voice (Yes or No). This is the ordinary method of voting.
2. By the raising of the right hand so a count can be taken. The count is to be recorded by the Vice-president and clerk.
3. By ballot. In delicate cases of discipline and other matters of a personal or critical nature and/or of great importance, including the election of persons, and motions to admit candidates to the Ministry of the Word or office of Commissioned Pastor, classis shall vote by ballot.

XI. CLASSICAL APPOINTMENTS

A. Classical Appointment Guidelines (Revised October 2014):

1. Definition:

Classical appointments are preaching assignments given by classis via the CIC/stated clerk at the request of a church in need due to pastoral vacancy or leave. These are obligations to which the churches of classis have covenanted together, so our churches are obligated to lend their minister to fulfill these assignments when made by classis.

2. Guidelines:

- a. To receive classical appointments a church without a preaching pastor must request them from the stated clerk.
- b. The stated clerk will prepare a schedule and send it to the churches and ministers involved.
- c. Assignments are normally for the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the months January to May and September to December. No assignments will be made for the months of June through August. In case of special services such as Thanksgiving, Easter, Christmas or any of the long stat weekends, then pulpit supply would be assigned for the following Sunday.
- d. If the churches and/or ministers desire to make changes in the schedule, they are expected to work them out between themselves and inform the stated clerk.
- e. A church requesting a classical appointment:
 - i. Is obligated to pay the amount per service set by classis to the church lending its minister (\$175.00 per service). Note: In the case of a preacher without a church, the church will pay the preacher directly. (*see B.1.c. below*).
 - ii. Must pay the minister for his/her traveling expenses. Classis will reimburse the church 50% of the traveling expenses. (*see B.2. below*).
 - iii. Must provide lodging and meals for the minister, if needed, if the minister accepts what the church provides. Otherwise he/she pays for it him/herself.

3. Covid-19:

In light of Covid-19, the Classical Interim Committee approved the following at its *November 17, 2020* meeting:

- a. Until the Covid-19 pandemic is deemed over, the default form of pulpit supply will be via a pre-recorded sermon. If this sermon is one that has already been preached by the assigned minister in his/her own congregation, no remuneration will be provided to the church or pastor.
- b. If the assigned minister offers to come and preach in-person, the CIC will support that decision, and remuneration will proceed as per the regular guidelines (*XI.A.e*).

- c. Churches without a preaching pastor are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities provided by digital sermons and reach beyond the local classis for preaching support, e.g. missionaries, etc.
- B. Reimbursements:
- 1. Churches requesting classical appointments:
 - a. Shall reimburse visiting ministers directly for their travel cost.
 - b. Shall provide lodging and meals, if needed. These are not included in the travel cost.
 - c. Shall reimburse the church of the visiting minister \$175.00 per service as set by classis. In case the pastor assigned does not have a home church, (i.e. chaplains, commissioned pastors, candidates, retired pastors, youth pastors, seminary students, persons holding licensures to exhort, un-ordained ministry staff, other gifted individuals etc.) the payment of \$175.00 will go directly to the pastor/person assigned.
 - 2. Classis will reimburse the church requesting a classical appointment 50% of the traveling expenses from the classical expense fund upon receipt of travelling documents.
- C. Notes:
- 1. Lodging: It has been customary that the pastor is put up by a family of the congregation. If the pastor does not like this arrangement, he needs to discuss that with the church and see what other arrangement can be made. But this is not to be included in the travel cost and cannot be claimed from the Classical Expense Fund.
 - 2. 2nd Service: If the hosting church normally has two services, arrangements must be made with the visiting pastor to see if he/she can do the second service. In case of the northern churches, please keep in mind that the 2nd service times may have to be altered so that the visiting pastor can make Sunday evening flights back to the lower mainland.
 - 3. Pastors / Preachers: Ordinarily, classis will assign an ordained pastor for the 1st Sunday of the month. The classical appointment for the 3rd Sunday maybe filled with either an ordained pastor or else another preacher (i.e. commissioned pastor, licensed exhorter, seminary student, chaplain etc.).

XII. RULE CHANGES

- A. Classis delegates, and church councils, are to be familiar with the Classis Rules of Procedure. When there are questions or concerns about process, the Rules of Procedure are appropriate and apt.
- B. These rules for classical procedure may be suspended, amended, revised, or abrogated by a majority vote of classis upon recommendation by the Classical Interim Committee.

APPENDIX A

FORMATTING & PRESENTATION OF OVERTURES TO CLASSIS

A. Definition:

1. An overture is a request for action made by an assembly to a higher assembly, or by an individual to their council.
2. A council may overture classis; a classis may overture synod.
3. Individual members of churches may only overture a classis or synod after first overturing their council and respective classis. A council may only overture synod after first overturing classis. Only when overtures are not acceded to, do individuals, councils, and classis appeal by overturing a higher assembly.
4. See II.A. of these ROP for more information on Overtures, Communications, and Appeals.

B. Procedure:

1. An overture being submitted should be accompanied by a cover letter, stating the place and date of the meeting of the assembly at which the overture was adopted; the letter is to be signed by the council clerk and/or chair.
2. If more than one overture is being submitted, each should begin on a separate page. A single cover letter will suffice.
3. Council overtures to classis must be submitted to the stated clerk seven (7) weeks prior to a classis meeting in order to be on the agenda. Overtures received late will be deemed out of order, unless classis rules otherwise.
4. Overtures to synod are due to the CRCNA executive director's office no later than March 15. Overtures or communications received after the March 15 deadline are accepted if they are relevant to reports found in the printed Synod Agenda (i.e., for matters that have not previously been made available to churches before the agenda is released). As classis meets the first week of October and the first week of March, overtures presented at either classis will meet this deadline.
5. Classis, by means of the stated clerk or the CIC, is available to provide assistance in formulating overtures or communications, when requested by an individual or a church council, making use of the Classis Rules of Procedures and its outline on how to prepare an overture.

C. Format:

1. The first part of the overture is a statement of three parts:
 - a. Who overtures whom – e.g., “the Council of First CRC overtures Classis BCNW”.
 - b. What specific action is being requested – e.g., “to instruct Classis BCNW to study...”.
 - c. What mode of implementation is being requested – e.g., to report to the Spring 2015 meeting of Classis BCNW”.
2. The second part of the overture is a presentation of grounds in support of the action being requested. Unless such grounds are brief, they are customarily itemized.
3. If the overture affects the classical ministry share assessment, include an approximation of the costs involved and the impact on assessments.
4. The overture is to be as succinct as possible while still being definitive.
5. If the Bible is quoted, the version used must be cited.
6. If other publications are quoted or referred to (e.g. book, Bible, article), they must be referenced properly. If the Acts of Synod are referred to, list the title, year, the recommendation number (if there is one) and the page number (e.g., AOS, 2013, R-4, p. 255).

D. Cautions:

1. "Careful and prayerful deliberation" ought to precede the submission of an overture. Grounds must demonstrate that "the petitioner's conscience is inappropriately infringed upon" by the matter raised. (*Church Order Commentary, 2011, p. 184*)
2. Overtures which deal with matters concerning the discipline or charges against persons must be dealt with sensitively. Individuals and councils must bear in mind Church Order articles 78 ff. In certain cases, the council may request and/or classis will invoke Judicial Code (*C.O. Art. 30c & its supplement*).

APPENDIX B

CLASSICAL OVERTURE/COMMUNICATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Advisory committees shall serve in order to facilitate the work of classis. They exist simply to give advice to the classical assembly. See IV. C. of these ROP for more information on Advisory Committees, particularly the procedure to be followed at classis when dealing with overtures, communications, and study committee reports.

- A. In the case of an overture or communication, advisory committees serve well by:
1. Communicating first with the church council or individual sending the overture or communication to classis. Verbal communication can especially provide a sense of the background for the overture or communication, its weight for the church/individuals and parties involved, and give opportunity for clarification.
 2. Meeting before final deliberations, so as to pray together about the matter, and to come to clear consensus on the advice they will render.
 3. Selecting a chair and a reporter for the committee. They ought to be designated as such in the list of those serving on the committee, which is included at the end of the advisory report. Should there be any possible conflict of interest, an advisor should ask the Classical Interim Committee to be excused from the work.
 4. Communicating to the stated clerk what amount of time is likely needed to handle the overture or communication during the assembly, taking into consideration:
 - the time needed to present the overture/communication committee report,
 - time given to the church to speak/rebut,
 - time for discussion.

Accordingly, the committee may need to check with the church bringing the overture or communication to see what time they will need. The advisory committee will recommend to the stated clerk the time to be allotted to the church to do this.

- B. Advisory Reports
1. Advisory reports must be written, be clear, concise, and address the overture or communication directly. Reports should also include a listing of the materials that may also have been submitted to the classis regarding the material.
 2. Advisory committees may add further recommendations, broaden the mandate, and provide additional grounds. A listing of supplementary materials and references are to be included with the report.
 3. As a matter of courtesy and fellowship, the committee shall ordinarily submit a copy of their recommendation to the council of the authoring congregation prior to the start of classis.
 4. If an overture or communication is submitted that addresses a confessional issue, or a matter the advisory committee deems weighty, the committee shall submit their written recommendation to the stated clerk five weeks before the time classis meets to give time to all councils and delegates to weigh both the overture/communication and the advisory committee response before the classis meeting.
 5. The report and motions of an overture/communication advisory committee take precedence over those of the overture or communication when being brought to the floor (unlike study committee or task force reports whose presentation and motions takes precedence over the report of the advisory committee).
 6. Classis may dismiss the report to address the overture or communication without advice, or

recommit the matter to the advisory committee for further work, or simply table the whole matter. Its decision is final until synod rules otherwise, or classis decides to revisit the matter.

7. A report should be formatted similar to what follows:

Classis BC Northwest – Month, Year
Overture/Communication Advisory Committee Report

Materials:

Observations

The advisory committee ...

Recommendation

The advisory committee recommends that classis accede/not accede to the overture that
“Classis BCNW ...”

Grounds:

- 1.
- 2.

Advisory committee members:

First, last name, chair

First, last name, reporter

First, last name

APPENDIX C

CLASSIS BCNW FUNDING PRINCIPLES

CONTENTS:

- I. Preamble
- II. Types of Funding
 1. Continuous Funding
 2. Grant Funding
 3. Incrementally Decreasing Funding
- III. Guidelines for Classical Ministry Share Partnership Requests
- IV. Appeal
- V. The Mission and Values of Classis BCNW

I. PREAMBLE

Classis BCNW will provide three types of funding:

1. Continuous Funding
2. Grant Funding
3. Incrementally Decreasing Funding

Classis BCNW has developed these three types of ministry funding because our current way of funding classical ministries is neither sustainable long-term, nor the best means of stewarding the resources of classis in today's ministry context. Support for classis ministries is plateauing, if not decreasing.

By pursuing these three types of ministry funding we are being proactive in:

- Finding ways to fund ministries in a sustainable way into the future.
- Responding to the Holy Spirit's prompts to birth new ministries from within the churches in our classis.
- Ensuring ministry share support is available to initiate and assist new ministry opportunities.

Classis BCNW wants to continue partnering with new and existing ministries with varying levels of financial support as well as with the encouragement to creatively and prayerfully seek out new, multiple streams of funding. We recognize that not all supported ministries will have the ability to become self-supporting, therefore expanding support beyond classical ministry shares, and even beyond our denominational constituency, provides alternate sources of revenue, volunteers, and prayer support.

The funding models suggested below provide for regular cycles of review, including mutual conversations about the needs, opportunities, joys, and challenges of each supported ministry. The goal is not necessarily to eliminate classical funding, but to gradually decrease levels of classical funding in order to increase available support for new work.

II. TYPES OF FUNDING

The principles of each funding type are not set in stone. If God births something new within a ministry supported by classis, their funding allotment is open to review, subject to classis funds being available. We trust that these types of funding will be part of a discernment process led by the Holy Spirit as each ministry seeks to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and seek first God's kingdom.

A. Continuous Funding

1. **Ministries:** Denominationally mandated ministries (as per synodical or Church Order requirement) are required to submit a Partnership Request to the Classical Ministries Committee (CMC). See III., below, for Guidelines for Partnership Requests.
2. **Funding:** Funding is available on a three-year basis, and must be within the capacity of classis to pay.
3. **Review:** After three years each ministry will be asked to submit a new Partnership Request. At that point, a review will take place in consultation with the ministry. That review will include outside input, assessment of alignment with the Mission and Values of Classis BCNW, measurable goals, and a funding recommendation.

B. Grant Funding

1. **Ministries:** New ministries initiated through a local church or partnering churches, and current classis ministries, may request Grant Funding by submitting a Partnership Request to the Classical Ministries Committee (see III., below, for Guidelines for Partnership Requests).
2. **Funding:**
 - a. Funding will be given as a fixed sum each year for three years.
 - b. There is no cap on the number of grants a ministry can receive, but the funding is subject to review every three years. It is anticipated that the ministry will become self-supporting at some point.
 - c. Ordinarily, classical Grant Funding will never be 100% of a ministry's budget.
 - d. We encourage ministries to look for the support of churches within classis and also outside support (e.g. private, ecumenical, community, foundations, etc.) in order to create more room for other ministries to access classical assistance.
3. **Review:** After three years each ministry will be asked to submit a new Partnership Request. At that point, a review will take place in consultation with the ministry. That review will include outside input, assessment of alignment with the Mission and Values of Classis BCNW, measurable goals, and a funding recommendation.

C. Incrementally Decreasing Funding

1. **Ministries:** New ministries initiated through a local church or partnering churches, and current classis ministries, may request Incrementally Decreasing Funding by submitting a Partnership Request to the Classical Ministries Committee (see III., below, for Guidelines for Partnership Requests).

2. **Funding:**
 - a. Funding will decrease annually each year for three years.
 - b. There is no cap on the number of years a ministry can receive Incrementally Decreasing Funding, but the funding is subject to review every three years, and each year the funding must continue to decrease. This funding is primarily seen as a way to “kick-start” a new ministry. It is anticipated, then, that classis funding will come to an end at some point.
 - c. Ordinarily, classical Incrementally Decreasing funding will never begin at 100% of a ministry’s budget.
 - d. We encourage ministries to look for the support of churches within classis and also outside support (e.g. private, ecumenical, community, foundations, etc.) in order to create more room for other ministries to access classical assistance.

3. **Review:** After three years each ministry will be asked to submit a new Partnership Request. At that point, a review will take place in consultation with the ministry. That review will include outside input, assessment of alignment with the Mission and Values of Classis BCNW, measurable goals, and a funding recommendation.

III. GUIDELINES FOR CLASSICAL MINISTRY SHARE PARTNERSHIP REQUESTS

As each classically supported ministry develops its annual budget, a key component is reviewing projected income and expenses. The Partnership Request is applicable:

- a. When a new ministry requests that classis partner with them through prayer and financial support.
- b. Once every 3 years when each supported ministry reviews its previous level of classis financial support and requests new financial support.

After receiving the Partnership Request, the Classical Ministries Committee (CMC) will meet with each ministry committee or board either face to face or via video conferencing. The purpose is to have an open conversation that results in a funding agreement which is collaborative and cooperative.

Note: Partnership Requests must be submitted in the spring in order to give the CMC sufficient time to present their recommendation to classis in October.

Each ministry will include in its Partnership Request:

1. State your annual funding request for the next three years.
2. Share a concise summary of the ministry’s operation:
 - a. What are you celebrating in this ministry?
 - b. What has caused you concern?
 - c. What challenges are you facing as you continue?
3. Review ministry goals
 - a. What are your ministry goals?
 - b. How were the goals met or not met in the past few years?
 - c. What adjustments (if any) are deemed necessary going forward in light of the Spirit’s leadership, cultural shifts, and measurable results?

4. Review the latest budget and a summary budget overview of the previous 2 years
 - a. What has been your biggest financial surprise and challenge?
 - b. Share some planned initiatives to increase funding from various sources.
 - c. What would you do if you had more funding?
5. Review how the ministry continues to align with the mission and values of Classis BCNW
 - a. What value(s) is/are most alive in your particular ministry?
 - b. Which value do you find most challenging in your ministry?
6. Besides funding, what other assistance can Classis BCNW provide to this ministry?

IV. APPEAL

Ministries can appeal their allocation directly to classis if they do not agree with the recommendation of the Classical Ministries Committee.

V. THE MISSION AND VALUES OF CLASSIS BCNW

Our Mission

Classis BCNW exists to encourage, equip, and empower congregations and ministries to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and seek first God's Kingdom.

The Values that Shape our Work, Witness, and Life Together

- **PRAYERFUL DEPENDENCE ON GOD:** Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we trust God to lead and provide for us as we engage in ministry together.
- **AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY:** Intentionally sharing life and story, we build each other up and encourage one another to live lives worthy of the calling we've received.
- **DISCIPLES MAKING NEW DISCIPLES:** Recognizing that the church's main calling is to make disciples of Jesus, we encourage one another, our congregations, and the ministries we represent to be faithful to God's mission and creative in living it out
- **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:** Through funding, training and support, we develop, commission, and equip new and existing leaders.
- **COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS:** Committing ourselves to each other as God has committed himself to us, we support the work of classis and the ministry of the CRCNA.