

Ministry Committees and Teams

This document specifies the name of each ministry committee/team, its composition, its purpose, and the description of its task/s. These committee descriptions may be changed by the majority vote of Classis upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

The Holland Classis bylaws state that “Committees, teams, taskforces, etc. exist to accomplish the vision, mission, and ministry of the Classis. In these bylaws, the term “committee” will be used to commonly apply to all these groupings” (Article VIII.A). The Classis standing committees are specified within the Holland Classis Bylaws.

Part 1. Forming and Dissolving Committees and Teams

A. Formation

1. A ministry committee/team is formed by the Executive Committee with the approval of the Classis. An ad hoc committee or team may be appointed by the Executive Committee without the approval of the Classis.
2. The formation of a committee/team requires these components to be written and placed within this document: a) the name of the committee, b) the composition or membership, c) the purpose and /or description of its tasks and responsibilities, and d) to whom the committee is accountable. The intended length of service for the committee/team, and/or the automatic dismissal date of the committee/ may also be included in its description.

B. Dissolution

1. A ministry committee/team is dissolved by the Executive Committee with the approval of the Classis.
2. A committee or team may be dissolved: a) at a date set upon formation of the committee; b) when its assigned task/s have been completed; c) when its work is no longer fruitful and effective; d) when it does not have adequate membership to accomplish its tasks and responsibilities; or e) when the Classis determines to change the classis structure.

Part 2 Composition of Ministry Committees and Teams (Listed alphabetically)

A. CHURCH MULTIPLICATION TEAM (CMT)

1. Membership: Six members minimum, three of whom are ministers.
2. Committee Responsibilities
 - a. Provide direction for developing *new* worshipping congregations within the Classis. The committee shall
 - 1) Develop and communicate the long range plan for new church starts.
 - 2) Promote effective models and approaches for church planting.
 - 3) Build partnerships between existing churches and new church starts.
 - 4) Participate in the Call and supervision of new church start pastors.
 - 5) Assist with securing resources for new church starts from the Reformed Church in America and the broader Christian community.
 - b. Encourage churches to serve as sponsors for new or emerging church starts.
 - c. Anticipate community changes that affect local congregations; encourage churches to adopt long range plans which are proactive, growth-oriented, and realistic.

B. CHURCH SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION COMMITTEE (CSS)

1. Membership: Ten members *minimum*, five of whom are ministers.
2. Committee responsibilities:
 - a. Provide support and supervision for the Classis congregations. Receive the annual *Constitutional Inquiries* and work with consistories reporting deficiencies in order to address and correct the issues. Receive the *Annual Consistorial Report* from churches and work with consistories to address the issues reported.
 - b. A minister under consideration for a call shall meet with a joint committee composed of available members of the Minister Support and Supervision and the Church Support and Supervision Committee. This joint committee shall have the authority to approve calls and instruct the stated clerk and president to sign the call form when the details of the Call Form are in order.
 - c. Act to approve or not approve the contract between a consistory and a minister (pastor), whether full or part-time, whether an RCA minister, non-RCA minister, or RCA commissioned pastor.
 - d. Act to approve or not approve the written request from a church for a waiver from the minimum salary standards. The request shall be signed by the president and clerk of the consistory and the minister affected by the waiver. The committee shall inform the Minister Support and Supervision committee of the request before acting on the request.
 - e. Act to dissolve the relationship between a pastor (minister) and a church, and dismiss the minister to another classis, if appropriate.
 - f. Appoint a minister of the Classis as Classis Representative/Supervisor to a consistory without a minister or senior minister.
 - 1) Provide representatives and consistories with the list of procedures and protocol approved by the Classis.
 - 2) In the event that either the representative or the consistory desires that a new representative be appointed, such requests shall be made to the CSS committee.
 - g. Approve the appointment of an interim minister to a church.

C. COMMISSIONED PASTOR SUPPORT & SUPERVISION COMMITTEE (CPSS)

1. Membership:
 - a. Four members minimum. It is preferred that at least one member is a commissioned pastor.
 - b. Committee membership may expand depending on the number of enrolled candidates and commissioned pastors.
 - c. All Classis representatives for commissioned pastor candidates' training program shall be members of this committee, unless specifically exempted by this committee.
2. Committee Responsibilities: The committee shall oversee the entire scope of commissioned pastors within the Holland Classis in accordance with the *RCA Book of Church Order, Part II, Article 14, (BCO)* and in cooperation with the Great Lakes Synod Commissioned Pastor Program. The breadth of this work ranges from receiving candidates into the training program to concluding the commissioning of a pastor's ministry within the Classis.
 - a. Act on each recommendation to receive a potential candidate under the care of the Classis.
 1. Interview an applicant who has submitted a written application and has been recommended by a consistory of a Classis church or congregation.
 2. Identify the particular ministry to which a candidate would be commissioned when the training is completed.
 3. Act to receive the potential candidate under the Classis' care when the committee is prepared to do so.
 4. Petition the Great Lakes Synod Commissioned Pastor Council for admittance of the candidate to the commissioned pastor training program.
 - b. Support and supervise candidates through the training process.

1. Approve an appropriate training program for each candidate in cooperation with the Great Lakes Synod Commissioned Pastor Program. The committee may assist with the design of the training program.
 2. Provide a classis representative for each candidate's supervision team. Approve a mentor for the candidate's supervision team.
 3. All training programs shall include at least one course at Western Theological Seminary. The committee may approve exemptions to this standard.
- c. Establish an examination process for each candidate completing the training process.
1. The examination process shall satisfy Classis that the candidate exhibits ministry competence in 1) maturity of faith, 2) personal integrity, 3) understanding of the Old and New Testaments and biblical interpretation, 4) Reformed theology, 5) church history, 6) knowledge of and adherence to the Constitution of the Reformed Church in America (the Government, the Standards, and the Liturgy), 7) nature and administration of the sacraments, 8) ability to preach, 9) capability to minister within the church, 10) An understanding and adherence of pastoral ethics and practices.
 2. The examination process shall fit the candidate's competencies, training, and commissioned ministry work. The entire Classis shall be invited to witness and participate in the examination process, though a session of the classis (stated or special) is not required.
 3. When the examination process is completed and the candidate is approved, the committee shall provide a certificate or letter stating this accomplishment.
- d. Approve the ministry employment contract and provide for a commissioning service for the candidate.
1. Provide a recommended template for the order of the commissioning service.
 2. Approve the date, time and place for the commissioning service. Commissioning services are not special sessions of the Holland Classis, but notice is to be sent throughout the Classis in the same manner as a special session, except attendance is not required.
 3. From the *BCO*, "The classis shall identify the specific form of commissioned service appropriate to the gifts and training of the candidate. When the classis receives an invitation for a ministry it deems appropriate for the candidate, the classis shall 1) authorize the ministry, 2) approve a contract, and 3) commission the candidate to the authorized ministry to the extent of the contract" (*BCO: Part II, Article 14, Section 5*).
 4. Recommend to Classis for approval the functions the soon-to-be commissioned pastor is permitted to fulfill.
 5. The stated clerk shall provide the commissioned pastor a certificate that identifies the commissioning date, the ministry to which the person is commissioned, the functions which the commissioned pastor is authorized to perform, and if applicable, the concluding date of the commissioning.
- e. Act on requests to receive a potential commissioned pastor into the Holland Classis from other RCA Classes.
1. Meet with all such persons requesting membership and ministry recognition in the Classis and with the church requesting the employment of the commissioned pastor.
 2. Determine whether the person's established competencies are fitting for the ministry request, and direct the candidate to complete training to satisfy the necessary competencies before approving the commissioning.
 3. The committee has the authority to deny any request for membership and ministry recognition.
- f. Provide oversight and evaluation for commissioned pastors annually as directed by the *BCO*.
1. Serve as a mentor to or appoint a mentor for each commissioned pastor.
 2. Evaluate the performance of the commissioned pastor at least annually.

3. Provide for the pastoral care of each commissioned pastor and the pastor's immediate family, or designate a pastoral caregiver.
 4. Assure that all provisions of the ministry contract are being fulfilled.
- g. Dissolve the pastoral relationship when the commissioned service has been completed.
1. Acknowledge that the person is no longer a commissioned pastor within that ministry setting. A *Covenant for Our Future Relationship* may be signed.
 2. Provide the former pastor with a statement of ministry that was performed and additional training that was accomplished during the ministry.
 3. Release the former pastor from Classis membership.
- h. Provide representation on the Great Lakes Commissioned Pastor Council when requested to do so.
- i. Cooperate with the Great Lakes Synod review of the processes used by the classis for commissioned pastor selection, preparation, commissioning support and supervision.

D. MINISTER SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION COMMITTEE (MSS)

1. Membership: Eight members minimum, four of whom are ministers.
2. Committee responsibilities:
 - a. Provide supervision to ministers of the Classis to assure that their ministries a) make responsible use of their education and gifts, b) witness to the Word in the world, and c) are loyal to the work and witness of the Reformed Church in America.
 - b. Act to approve or not approve applications for ordination. The criteria for approval of ordination are those of the Book of Church Order. When MSS approves a request for an ordination service, it shall request the president to call a special session of the Classis.
 - c. Act to receive or not receive ministers from other Classes.
 - 1) The committee shall meet with all ministers requesting membership in the Classis.
 - 2) A minister under consideration for a call shall meet with a joint committee composed of available members of the Minister Support and Supervision and the Church Support and Supervision Committee. This joint committee shall have the authority to approve calls and instruct the stated clerk and president to sign the call form when the details of the Call Form are in order.
 - d. Act to approve or not approve requests for installation and commissioning services, and request the president to call a special session, as appropriate.
 - e. Designate a minister to serve as a mentor to a newly-ordained minister, a minister received from another denomination, or a minister received into the Classis as the committee deems appropriate. The committee shall provide guidelines for the role of mentors.
 - f. Determine the voting rights of enrolled ministers and provide a current listing of the members of the Classis by voting status and ministry category.
 - g. Provide for the pastoral care for all ministers of the Classis and their immediate families.
 - h. Dismiss ministers and candidates to other Classes.
 - i. Declare ministers "without charge," "inactive" or "retired." These declarations shall be reported to the Classis.
 - j. Present to the Classis a recommendation that declares a minister demitted from ministry.

E. MISSIONAL PARTNERS COMMITTEE (MP)

The committee name surfaced from reflection on the RCA "**Our Call**";
*"Following Christ in mission together, led by the Holy Spirit, and **working with all the partners God provides**, we believe that God is calling the Reformed Church in America over the next ten years to focus its efforts and resources on starting new congregations and revitalizing existing congregations, thereby empowering fruitful and faithful ministries for the glory of God"* (RCA "Our Call" Statement).

1. Membership: Six members minimum, three of whom are ministers.
2. Missional Partners Committee **Values**
 - a. We will work in ways that synergize the energies of all partners.
 - b. We will seek to avoid duplication of effort or competition of energy.
 - c. We will support ministries that, through tangible effort, make the Holland Community a better place to live.
 - d. Missional means that our efforts are for Christ's kingdom and that our actions benefit others.
3. Missional Partners Committee **Mission**
 - a. To follow Christ in mission together, led by the Holy Spirit.
 - b. To work with all the partners God provides.
 - c. To empower fruitful and faithful ministry for the glory of God.
 - d. Our task is to work together and with others for Christ's mission. This imperative means that we are not to enter into relationships with others just to accomplish our tasks. The priority is that we develop partnerships with others wherein we can work together to follow Christ's call to mission. Others' task and calling is important and valued, as our own. "Together is better." We will empower fruitful and faithful ministries to the glory of God; not for our own accolades.
4. Missional Partners Committee **Duties:**
 - a. Follow Christ in mission in our Community
 - 1) Address and assist churches to address the community and world with the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it applies to all areas of well-being for personal and communal life.
 - 2) Represent the Classis to various ministry programs and agencies in the Holland community that address concerns for personal and communal life, and determine the Classis benevolences to such ministries.
 - 3) Represent the Classis to various ministry programs and agencies in the Reformed Church in America which address concerns for personal and communal life and well-being.
 - 4) Express the Christian care for creation, as a response to the Gospel.
 - 5) Encourage and support the development of service ministries, especially in and through our Classis churches.
 - b. Work with all the partners God provides.
 - 1) Participate in the development of "cooperative ecumenism" in the greater Holland, either formally or informally, to accomplish specific ministry or mission goals.
 - 2) Engage in dialogues with other Christians, and faith groups in our community, to clarify our common understanding of faith, and foster our common expression in evangelism, witness, and service.
 - 3) Implement opportunities for public demonstrations of our partnership with other Christian bodies, and the affirmation of each denomination's ministry.
 - 4) Represent the Classis in multi-church, area-wide events of evangelism, social witness or other "Christian witness."
 - a) Determine when the Classis should have a visible presence or act as a sponsor for specific area-wide events or efforts.
 - b) Work cooperatively with other Classis committees when an event/effort might overlap areas of responsibility.
 - c) Inform the Classis of opportunities to be involved in area-wide Christian witness events.
 - 5) Empower fruitful and faithful ministry for the glory of God
 - a) Support community ministries that benefit cross-culture relations.
 - b) Provide means for training leaders for effective ministry

F. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE (PER)

1. Reporting: This committee is accountable to and reports only to the Executive Committee.
2. Membership: The membership shall include the Past President and four other members who serve terms of three years. Committee members may serve two terms. The president and vice president are ex officio members of the committee.
3. Purpose: The Personnel Committee shall set guidelines for and annually evaluate the paid staff of the Holland Classis.
4. Committee responsibilities:
 - a. The committee assists the staff to set performance objectives for the coming year, and advises the staff on implementing the objectives.
 - b. The committee provides support and counsel to the staff.
 - c. The committee implements any goals which the Executive Committee sets for the staff.
 - d. The committee evaluates the performance of the staff at least annually and reports their evaluation to the Executive Committee.
 - e. The committee recommends staff salaries and benefits provisions to the Executive Committee. The recommendations need to be received by the date set by the SF committee for inclusion in the proposed Classis budget.

G. STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE COMMITTEE (SF)

1. Membership: Six members minimum, preferably who have financial training. Ministers are not eligible to serve on this committee.
2. Committee responsibilities:
 - a. Present a proposed annual Classis budget for the coming year to the Executive Committee.
 - b. Propose a minimum salary schedule for pastors (i.e. ministers employed by churches full-time whether through a call or contract).
 - 1) Review annually the salary schedule for pastors of the Classis in relation to the current cost of living.
 - 2) Report Great Lakes Synod's action to the Classis with recommendation for action.
 - 3) Provide information to consistories on how to secure financial assistance necessary to meet salary standards.
 - c. Present an auditor's report to the Classis as scheduled by the committee or requested by Executive Committee.
 - d. Present to the Classis the request from a consistory for the sale, transfer, lease, exchange, or mortgaging of property on which there stands a building designed for worship or religious instruction, or a residence for a minister.
 - e. Present to the Classis the request from a consistory for permission to incur debt. Guidance for this action is provided by the BCO (quoted here):
 - 1) A consistory shall not incur a total indebtedness which exceeds two-thirds of the prior year's expenditures for congregational purposes, as reported to the General Synod, without the approval of the Classis.
 - 2) When a church is planning a building project which is likely to exceed the indebtedness limit, the consistory shall communicate its intent to the committee prior to taking any actions which will result in the necessity of incurring the indebtedness (e.g., demolition of facilities, signing contracts with contractors, etc.).
 - 3) Requests for permission to incur indebtedness must be given to the committee chairperson at least 30 days prior to the time of the next stated session of the Classis. If requested by the committee, the church shall provide financial statements for the previous five years.
 - f. Oversee the investment of the Bethel Fund principal. Report the proceeds of the investment to the Executive Committee annually, or as requested by the Executive Committee.

H. STUDENT SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION COMMITTEE (SSS)

1. Membership: Eight members *minimum, four* of whom are ministers.
2. Committee responsibilities: Attend to candidates enrolled in RCA seminaries or the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA)
 - a. Interview an applicant who has submitted a written application and has been recommended by a consistory.
 - b. Enroll approved applicants as candidates for ministry under the care of the Classis. Newly enrolled candidates shall be presented to the Classis at a stated session.
 - c. Serve as supervisors and counselors to candidates for ministry.
 - d. Petition the General Synod or its agent, on behalf of the candidate, for a Certificate of Fitness for Ministry.
 - e. Apply to MFCA on behalf of candidates for ministry seeking to pursue an alternate course for ministerial formation.
 - f. Advise candidates for ministry on the procedure for applying for dispensation from the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry requirements. The committee shall petition the appropriate agent of the General Synod on behalf of the applicant.
 - g. Recommend to Executive Committee items for the May stated session including the examination of candidates for ministry. The committee shall present a list of candidates who are to be examined and a slate of examiners.
 - h. Recommend to the Classis action to grant the annual *Provisional License to Preach* certificates for candidates.
 - i. Present licensed candidates at their ordination services.

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