

# BYLAWS - CLASSIS of ILLIANA [approved March 15, 2011]

## Preamble

The Classis of Illiana, an assembly and judicatory of the Reformed Church in America, will be governed by these Bylaws and the Book of Church Order (BCO) of the Reformed Church in America. If any rules conflict the BCO will take precedence.

The Classis of Illiana is a permanent continuing body which functions between stated sessions through teams empowered by these bylaws.

The responsibilities of the classis are those defined in the Book of Church Order, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 2.

## ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

**SECTION A** - The classis shall consist of the enrolled ministers of the Classis and elder delegates representing the churches of Classis.

**SECTION B** - Member churches are:

### ILLINOIS

Bourbonnais, Cornerstone  
Crete Ref  
Danforth Ref  
Frankfort, Peace Community  
Glenwood, Living Springs Community  
Kankakee, Faith Ref  
Lansing, First Ref  
Lansing, Grace Ref  
Lynwood, Bethany Comm (Living Grace)  
St. Anne, First Ref of Wichert  
St. Anne (Hopkins Park), Pembroke Comm.  
South Holland, Calvary Community  
South Holland, First Ref  
South Holland, Thorn Creek  
Tinley Park Ref

### INDIANA

DeMotte, First Ref  
DeMotte, American Ref  
Dyer, Faith  
Fishers, Christ's Community  
Fort Wayne, Christ's Community  
Gary, Ross Ref  
Hammond, Riverside Community  
Indianapolis, Christian Park Ref  
Lafayette, Community Ref  
Lafayette, Heartland Community  
Munster, Trinity Ref

### OHIO

Ohio City (Van Wert), St. Paul's Ref

## ARTICLE II - MEETINGS

### SECTION A - QUORUMS.

1. Quorums at sessions of classis are defined in the BCO

### SECTION B - CLASSIS SESSIONS.

1. The classis will have three stated sessions each year. Stated sessions will normally be held on the second Thursday of March, the second Thursday of October, and a Summer session which will be held in May or June, the date being set by the Executive Team in consultation with the Leadership Development team. The March and October session dates may be adjusted by the Executive Team as long as at least thirty days notice of the date is given to the classis membership.
2. The locations of the stated sessions are as follows: the March and October sessions will normally rotate between the DeMotte churches and the summer session to rotate throughout the classis in alphabetical order. The Executive Team may change the location of any session at its discretion.
3. Special sessions may be called by the president as provided in the Book of Church Order. Written notice shall be sent ten days in advance giving time, place and agenda. Items may be added to the agenda by three-fourths vote of classis.
4. Stated sessions shall include a devotional service. All meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.

### SECTION C – MEMBERS AND DELEGATES.

1. Ministers become members of the classis when they sign the Declaration for Ministers of Word and Sacrament formulary.
2. Elder delegates are determined by Book of Church Order rules.

3. Voting rights shall be limited to elder delegates and those enrolled ministers who are actively serving as ministers either under the jurisdiction of or with the approval of the classis.
4. Officers of classis and team directors are ex-officio members of classis but are not entitled to vote at a classis session unless he or she is an active minister enrolled in the classis or an elder delegate from his or her church.

#### **SECTION D - ABSENCES.**

1. Members of classis permanently leaving the meeting must be excused by the Executive Team.
2. Requests to be absent from a session should be sent to the Stated Clerk prior to the meeting.

#### **SECTION E - ORDER OF BUSINESS.**

1. Classis teams will be empowered to act on behalf of classis within each team's area of authority. Action taken by classis teams will be reported to classis by each team in writing at the March and October stated classis sessions and other sessions as necessary.
2. Each classis stated session will include business that is of sufficient importance to be considered by the classis.
3. Classis stated sessions will include significant ministry time such as celebration, education, resourcing, and prayer. Ministry time will be integrated within the team reports and/or as a special ministry time at the session.
4. The Ministry Leadership Team will be responsible for setting a theme and program of the ministry time at each stated session. Effort will be made to have a balance of themes between the ministry teams.
5. Classis reports from the teams shall be submitted to the Executive Team prior to the Executive Team meeting that occurs immediately before each stated session. Items to be decided by classis should be submitted as recommendations. Reports will normally be in written form as they will be presented to classis.
6. Executive Team will meet no later than two weeks before each session to approve and set the agenda for that session.
7. The meeting agenda will be sent to the classis membership no later than ten days before the session.
8. No item can be added to the set agenda except by a two-thirds vote of classis.
9. The Executive Team will coordinate the agenda of the stated sessions to allow for a proper balance of administrative ministry and team ministry time.
10. The stated session meetings will include the following items as appropriate for the session:
  - a. Roll call.
  - b. Worship and devotions
  - c. Enrollment of new members and recognition of guests
  - d. Reading and approval of the minutes from special sessions.
  - e. Communications and referrals.
  - f. Unfinished business
  - g. Executive Team
  - h. Ministry Leadership Team
    - i. Leadership Development Team
    - ii. Church Multiplication Team
    - iii. Relationship Development Team
    - iv. Congregational Revitalization Team
  - i. Vision Team
  - j. Nomination Team
  - k. New business
  - l. Ministry time
  - m. Adjournment:
    - i. Reading and approval of the journal.
    - ii. Closing roll call.
    - iii. Recognizing new officers
    - iv. Motion of adjournment - Closing prayer.

## **SECTION F - PARLIAMENTARY RULES.**

1. Business shall be conducted in accordance with the Book of Church Order, the Bylaws of Classis of Illiana and Robert's Rules of Order. If there are any conflicts the Book of Church Order takes precedence over the bylaws of the classis and Robert's Rules of Order; and the bylaws of the classis takes precedence over Robert's Rules of Order.

## **ARTICLE III - OFFICERS**

### **SECTION A - OFFICERS.**

1. They shall be president, vice president, second vice president, stated clerk, and treasurer.

### **SECTION B - ELECTION OF OFFICERS.**

1. The president, vice president, and second vice president will be elected by classis from a slate presented by the Nomination Team.
2. The election will occur at the March stated session of classis.
3. In the event of a vacancy the Executive Team is empowered to make temporary appointments if necessary.
4. The stated clerk and treasurer are appointed by the Executive Team.

### **SECTION C – TERMS OF OFFICERS**

1. The terms of office for the president, vice president, and second vice president shall be two years. A person may serve up to three consecutive terms in an office.
2. Terms will begin at the close of the same meeting where the election occurred.
3. The stated clerk and the treasurer shall have contract terms of two years. New appointment or re-appointment shall occur biennially at the first regular Executive Team meeting following the March stated session of classis in even numbered years. There are no term limits for these offices.

### **SECTION E - DUTIES OF OFFICERS.**

1. The president shall:
  - a. Preside at all classis meetings or appoint a presiding officer.
  - b. Appoint special committees or teams unless otherwise provided.
  - c. Conduct meetings according to the rules of Synod and Robert's Rules of Order.
  - d. Present a report on the State of Religion at the March stated session.
  - e. Be a member of the Ministry Leadership Team or appoint a designee
  - f. Appoint the members to the Vision-Nomination Team with the advice and consent of the full Executive Team and will hold the Vision-Nomination Team accountable to meet when needed and at least annually.
2. The vice president shall:
  - a. Assist the president as needed.
  - b. Preside when the president is absent or at the request of the president.
3. The second vice president shall:
  - a. Serve as the presiding officer whenever the president or vice president is unavailable or at the request of the president.
  - b. Perform duties that may be assigned from time-to-time by the Executive Team.
4. The stated clerk shall:
  - a. Send notices of meetings at least ten days in advance of meetings.
  - b. Send team reports and other information to the membership in advance of stated sessions.
  - c. Forward necessary reports to Regional and General Synods.
  - d. Write Classis minutes, issue a digest of Classis minutes after the stated sessions, and handle correspondence.
  - e. Have at meetings copies of Classis bylaws, Book of Church Order, and Classis, Regional Synod and General Synod minutes.
  - f. Perform other duties assigned by the BCO or by the Executive Team
5. The treasurer shall:
  - a. Be custodian of all classis funds.

- b. Disburse funds as invoices are authorized for payment. Authorizations will come from team directors regarding team budgets or previously authorized disbursements (e.g. assessment payments, classis session expense). Any disbursement not in these two categories needs authorization from the president or a vice president.
- c. Present a treasurer's report at every Executive Team meeting and at the March and October classis sessions. Present reports to ministry teams when requested by the teams.
- d. Make records available to persons appointed by the Executive Team to review the classis records and to facilitate that report to the Executive Team.
- e. Perform other duties assigned by the Executive Team

## **ARTICLE IV - PERMANENT TEAMS**

### **SECTION A – THE TEAMS.**

- 1. Executive Team
- 2. Ministry Leadership Team
- 3. Ministry teams:
  - a. Leadership Development Team
  - b. Church Multiplication Team
  - c. Relationship Development Team
  - d. Congregational Revitalization Team
- 4. Vision Team
- 5. Nomination Team

### **SECTION B – EXECUTIVE TEAM**

- 1. The Executive Team exists to coordinate and empower the work of the teams, to facilitate the working of classis, to keep and enforce the value of the vision, and to act on behalf of classis between sessions
- 2. It is accountable to the Classis. It is responsible for: implementing goals, objectives, policies, and decisions of the Classis; it is responsible for supporting, strengthening, and coordinating the work of the Ministry Teams through the Ministry Leadership Team.
- 3. Its membership shall consist of the president, vice president, second vice president, and a member-at-large. The stated clerk will be an ex officio member of the Executive Team but without vote. The treasurer will report to the Executive Team and will attend when requested but will not be a member of the team. The stated clerk and treasurer function as the staff of the Executive Team.
- 4. The member-at-large will be elected by classis from a slate presented by the nomination team at the March stated session of classis, will serve a two-year term, and will be eligible to serve up to three consecutive terms.
- 5. The Executive Team shall transact classis business between sessions and have authority to appoint interim officers and team directors. Transactions involving more than \$1,000,000 shall be submitted to classis for approval.
- 6. It shall act as trustee of classis funds, with authority to manage all classis finances including acceptance, investment, transfer, mortgaging, and disbursement of money, real estate, personal property, both tangible and intangible, and devises and bequests. It may borrow money, make loans, and hold title to real estate.
- 7. It shall meet at least two weeks prior to each stated session of Classis and at any other time deemed necessary.
- 8. It has authority to hire and dismiss classis staff, and will annually perform classis staff reviews personally or through its designate at or before the March Executive Team meeting. Classis staff includes the stated clerk, treasurer, and ministry team directors.
- 9. It recommends to classis any changes in team structures and prepares and recommends bylaws changes
- 10. It will act as a clearing house of business brought to the classis by assigning such business to the appropriate team if possible, including financial requests.
- 11. It will process and recommend requests for permission to borrow from congregations and will process annual automatic credit limits for congregations.
- 12. It will provide financial accountability for treasurer work including arranging for financial reviews
- 13. It may initiate special initiatives and assign those initiatives to teams if appropriate

14. It will approve and arrange ordinations and installations
15. Processes and recommends overtures unless appropriate to assign to a ministry team

### **SECTION C – MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TEAM**

1. The Ministry Leadership Team will drive the ministry of the classis. It is accountable and will report to the Executive Team.
2. It is the place where new initiatives will be birthed, dreams articulated, and plans for fulfilling vision occur.
3. It shall consist of the president or his/her designee, the vice president, the four ministry team directors, and one person at-large.
4. The at-large person will be appointed by the other Ministry Leadership Team members, will be a current member of some ministry team, and will serve for three-year terms and may be re-appointed.
5. The chairperson of the Ministry Leadership Team will be selected by the team.
6. It will meet at least four times per year.
7. It will be responsible to plan the ministry time portion of classis meetings with a balance maintained of themes from the four ministry teams.
8. It will coordinate the ministry of the classis through the ministry teams.
9. It will act on requests to affirm the appointments of the Ministry Team members that are made by the ministry team directors.
10. It receives, reviews, and processes team budgets and recommends a classis budget. Classis will approve (or disapprove) the budget as a whole.

### **SECTION D – MINISTRY TEAMS**

1. Leadership Development Team
  - a. The Leadership Development Team exists to identify, equip and release effective and gifted leaders.
2. Church Multiplication Team
  - a. The Church Multiplication Team exists to implement strategies and plans to grow the Kingdom of God by starting new churches.
3. Relationship Development Team
  - a. The Relationship Development Team exists to facilitate pastors and churches working together in relationship with one another as members of the body of Christ.
4. Congregational Revitalization Team
  - a. The Congregational Revitalization Team exists to cultivate an environment of innovative ministry and resources for revitalizing existing congregations.
5. Common ministry team guidelines
  - a. Ministry Teams guided by the Ministry Leadership Team will drive the ministry of the classis
  - b. Ministry team directors:
    - i. Each team will have a ministry team director. The ministry team director will be a staff person for that team
    - ii. The ministry team director will be in charge of the team and will be accountable for the work of the team
    - iii. The budget, hours, and duties of the ministry team director will be approved by the Executive Team. The ministry team director will be accountable to the Executive Team.
    - iv. The ministry team director will appoint the members to his/her team that are necessary to accomplish the team goals. The director will obtain affirmation of the appointments from the Ministry Leadership Team.
  - c. Membership:
    - i. Members of the teams will be persons who have gifts and passion for the area of responsibility of that team.
    - ii. Generally members will be assigned to a particular ministry area of the team.
    - iii. Members will be affirmed by the Ministry Leadership Team.

- iv. Additional persons appointed to sub-teams do not need Ministry Leadership Team affirmation.
- d. Responsibilities and empowerment:
  - i. Each team will have a Ministry Guide that will identify specific duties of the team as well as processes to fulfill those duties. The team Ministry Guides are always open to change and refinement by the teams. The Ministry Leadership Team will approve any changes to the Ministry Guide.
  - ii. Teams are empowered to work within their assigned areas of responsibility. The Executive Team may assign tasks to a particular Ministry Team. The Ministry Teams will resource and dream through the Ministry Leadership Team.
  - iii. Teams may assign and empower sub-teams to carry out particular duties of the team. Teams may appoint additional persons to help carry out particular duties of the team. Sub-teams may have persons not officially a part of the team. Sub-teams may be as small as one person.
  - iv. Each team will have a working budget. Teams are empowered to do ministry in their assigned area working within their budget without getting other permission. Budgets will be proposed by each team to the Ministry Leadership Team.
  - v. Teams will be proactive in their areas of responsibility.

## **SECTION E – VISION-NOMINATION TEAM**

1. The Vision-Nomination Team has two areas of responsibility: facilitating a vision analysis activity and making nominations for positions as needed.
2. The team will have three members who will have the necessary gifts of wisdom, discernment, and vision analysis.
3. Two team members will be appointed by the president with advice and consent of the Executive Team. The remaining team member will be appointed by the Ministry Leadership Team. The moderator of the team will be appointed by the president.
4. Vision analysis gathering:
  - a. The team will facilitate a gathering of the Executive Team and the Ministry Leadership Team for the purpose of vision analysis.
  - b. The gathering will seek to discern how well each ministry team is progressing towards realizing the team's vision.
  - c. The gathering will seek to discern how well the classis as a whole is progressing towards realizing the vision of the classis.
  - d. The gathering will reevaluate the vision of the classis to determine if the vision needs to be modified.
  - e. The team will make a vision accountability report to classis of what was discerned at the gathering.
  - f. The team will determine the format and scope of the analysis gathering activity.
  - g. The team will constitute the vision analysis gathering as often as it determines it is needed but no less than once every two years.
5. Nominations:
  - a. For the president, vice president, second vice president, and Executive Team member-at-large positions, the team will:
    - i. Solicit suggestions from the classis for persons to fill those positions
    - ii. Process, review, and interview candidates for the positions as the team determines
    - iii. Present a single slate to the classis
    - iv. Request classis to give a vote of affirmation of the candidates
  - b. For the classis staff positions (stated clerk, treasurer, and ministry team directors) the team will suggest to the Executive Team persons for appointment. The Executive Team is the team that has authority to appoint those persons.

## **ARTICLE V – SPECIAL OR TEMPORARY COMMITTEES**

### **SECTION A – COMMITTEES TYPES.**

1. Judicial Business Committee – appointed as needed
2. Organization committees and boards with specific classis representation
3. Other temporary committees that do not fall under the responsibility of a Ministry Team

## **SECTION B – RULES AND GUIDELINES.**

### **1. Judicial Business Committee**

- a. A Judicial Business Committee shall be appointed when the president of classis, the clerk of classis, or the chairperson/staff of the Relationship Development Team determines that there is a possibility of formal judicial action as defined in the RCA Book of Church order.
- b. The committee shall meet promptly after the members have been selected and shall select a chairperson from the members of the committee.
- c. The Judicial Business Committee shall:
  - i. Review and recommend appropriate action on complaints and appeals as provided in the Book of Church Order.
  - ii. Bring a charge under Book of Church Order Chapter 2, Part I of an offense as defined therein when it determines that the filing of a charge is appropriate.
  - iii. Investigate all charges brought by individuals or filed by the committee to determine whether there is sufficient merit to the charges to warrant further consideration.
  - iv. Determine whether efforts to resolve a matter, which is the subject of a charge, short of trial would be appropriate.
  - v. Dismiss a charge or bring it to trial as may be appropriate.
  - vi. If the committee is the accuser, move forward with evidence at a trial.
  - vii. Judicial Business Committee shall operate independently of all classis teams.
- d. The committee shall disband when it has completed the business for which it was created.

### **2. Organization committees and boards with specific classis representation**

- a. Representation and responsibilities will follow the rules of the particular organization
- b. The president will appoint the classis representation when needed reporting those appointments through the Executive Team.
- c. If reports from the representatives are appropriate, they shall be written whenever possible. Oral reports will be at the discretion of the Executive Team.

### **3. Other temporary committees**

- a. With the approval of or direction from the Executive Team, the president will appoint other temporary committees as might be needed for a specific task.
- b. Those groups will disband when the task is completed.

## **ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS AND SUSPENSION OF RULES.**

### **SECTION A - AMENDMENTS.**

1. These rules may be amended by a two-thirds vote at a stated classis session, provided the changes have been approved at a previous stated session.

### **SECTION B - SUSPENSION OF RULES.**

1. These rules may be set aside, in whole or in part, for a single classis session by two-thirds vote, providing such action is in accord with the Book of Church Order.