

REGIONAL SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA
BYLAWS

Preamble

The Regional Synod of Mid-America, a constituent part 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.

Responsibilities of the Regional Synod:

1. The regional synod shall exercise a general superintendence over the interests and concerns of the classes within its bounds.
2. The regional synod shall exercise an appellate supervisory power over the acts, proceedings, and decisions of its several classes.
3. The regional synod shall form, combine, and disband classes, and may transfer churches from one classis to another within its bounds.
4. The regional synod shall create whatever organization it desires for the furtherance of the work of the gospel within its bounds, provided such organization does not infringe upon the prerogatives of the several classes or churches.

The Regional Synod is a permanent continuing body which functions between Stated Session through committees. (BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER, Chap. 1, Part III, Art. 1, Sec. 3 and Chap. 1, Part III, Art. 2)

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

Sec. A - The Regional Synod will consist of the appointed minister and elder delegates from each of the classes within the bounds determined for it by the General Synod.

Sec. B – The delegates of the synod will be:

1. The delegates from the classes of the Synod to the Executive Council as defined later in these bylaws. If an Executive Council delegate is unable to attend the annual session of the synod, the classis of which the Executive Council delegate is a member may appoint an alternate of the same office to be a delegate to the annual session. However, that alternate will be a delegate only for the session of appointment with the regular Executive Council delegate reassuming delegate status at the end of the session.
2. Additional delegates from each classis so that the total composition of each classis delegation will be equal to two minister delegates and two elder delegates from each classis having less than 4,000 communicant members plus one additional minister and elder delegate for each additional 2,000 communicants, or fraction thereof, for any classis in excess of 4000 communicant member; the total not to exceed five ministers and five elder delegates per classis.
3. The president and vice president, elected at a previous annual meeting, will be delegates of Regional Synod during their terms of office.

Sec. C - The past president, the stated clerk, the treasurer, and the chairperson of the Overtures and Judicial Business Committee will serve as ex-officio members of Regional Synod without vote and attend Synod meetings.

Sec D – Manitoqua Ministries is a partner in ministry with the Synod of Mid-America, both working together in mission to further the kingdom of God.

ARTICLE II - MEETINGS

Sec. A - Annual Sessions of Regional Synod will:

1. Convene annually in the month of March or April at the time and place determined by the Executive Council.

2. Have specific agendas, formats, and timetables that are determined by the Executive Council.
3. Include reports from each synod committee with policy changes, new programs, or other business presented as recommendations.
4. Close with prayer.

Sec. B - Special Sessions of Regional Synod will:

1. Be called in accordance with the Book of Church Order, Chapter 1, Part III, Art. 4, Sec. 2.
2. Be held at the time and place determined by the Executive Council.

Sec. C - Quorums will at all sessions consist of a majority of the minister delegates and majority of the elder delegates representing all classes within the bounds of Regional Synod.

Sec. D - All sessions will be conducted in accordance with the Book of Church Order, the Bylaws of Regional Synod and also the Robert's Rules of Order. If there are any conflicts the Book of Church Order takes precedence over the Bylaws of the Regional Synod and Robert's Rules of Order; and the Bylaws of the Regional Synod takes precedence over Robert's Rules of Order.

Sec. E – Agenda

The business of Regional Synod will include the following elements:

1. Devotional service
2. Roll call and seating of guests
3. Approval of minutes of last session
4. State of Religion Report
5. Report of Executive Council and consideration of its actions
6. Staff reports
7. Election of officers
8. Special committee reports and consideration of their actions
9. Overtures and Judicial Business report
10. Other business
11. Roll call and reading of the journal
12. Seating of the new officers
13. Adjournment
14. Closing prayer

Sec. F - Reports

1. All items for consideration by the Regional Synod must be in the office of the Stated Clerk by March 1 of each year.
2. Written reports with recommendations from the Executive Council, synod staff, and the synod's committees including special committees will be sent by the Stated Clerk to each delegate ten days prior to the annual meeting. The Overtures and Judicial Business Committee may delay its report until the annual meeting, if necessary.

Sec. G – Overtures

The Regional Synod may receive overtures from a classis. It shall not receive overtures which deal with matters under adjudication or which make either direct or implied charges against persons. Overtures shall be submitted to the Regional Synod office or postmarked not later than March 31.

ARTICLE III - OFFICERS AND PERSONNEL OF REGIONAL SYNOD

Sec. A - Officers of Regional Synod will be president, vice president, immediate past president, stated clerk, and treasurer.

Sec. B – Election

1. An election for president and/or vice president will be held whenever there will be a vacancy in that office at the time of the close of a stated session.
2. The president will be elected as follows:

- a. The current vice-president shall be the sole nominee on the first electing ballot. If the vote is affirmative, the current vice-president shall be declared elected.
 - b. If the vote is not affirmative, the election for president shall follow the process prescribed for election of vice-president, electing the president from the slate for vice-president as presented by the Nominating Committee.
 - c. If the office of vice-president is vacant, the election for president shall follow the process prescribed for election of vice-president with the exception that the Nominating Committee will form a slate consisting of at least three persons who are delegates to the annual session. The nominees who remain after the election of president shall constitute the slate for vice-president.
3. The vice president will be elected from the regular delegates to the annual Stated Session.
 - a. The Executive Committee will act as a Nominating Committee.
 - b. Prior to the annual session the Nominating Committee will form a slate consisting of at least two persons who are delegates to the annual session.
 - c. The Nominating Committee will endeavor to notify the delegates to the regional synod of the slate prior to the annual session.
 - d. The slate will be presented to the synod for election at the annual session. The synod will be permitted to make additional nominations from the floor.
 - e. A simple majority for a single candidate on the electing ballot will constitute an election. If no nominee receives a majority on the first electing ballot, the regional synod shall proceed to a second electing ballot limited to the two persons receiving the largest number of votes on the first electing ballot. The person receiving the most votes on this ballot shall be elected.
 4. The stated clerk will be elected by the Executive Council, meeting in executive session without the stated clerk or treasurer, at its first meeting following the Synod's annual session. Election will occur in odd numbered years, except in case of vacancy where election will occur as soon as possible.
 5. The treasurer will be elected by the Executive Council, meeting in executive session without the treasurer or stated clerk, at its first meeting following the Synod's annual session. Election will occur in odd numbered years, except in case of vacancy where election will occur as soon as possible.
 6. In case of vacancy in the office of vice-president, the Executive Council shall endeavor to fill the office from the regular delegates who were in attendance at the previous annual Synod session.

Sec. C - Terms of Office

1. The president will serve for two years and will assume that office at the close of the Stated Session at which he or she was elected and serve to the close of the second annual Stated Session after he or she was elected.
2. The vice president will serve for two years or until elected to the office of president, whichever occurs first, and will assume that office at the close of the Stated Session at which he or she was elected and serve to the close of the second annual Stated Session after he or she was elected.
3. The stated clerk will serve a two year term and will be eligible for reelection.
4. The treasurer will serve a two year term and will be eligible for reelection.
5. The term of the immediate past president will begin upon the completion of his or her term as president and will continue until there is a new immediate past president.

Sec. D - Duties

1. The president will:
 - a. Begin each session at the appointed time and place with prayer.
 - b. Clearly state and explain, if necessary, the business to be transacted.
 - c. Enforce the Bylaws of Regional Synod.
 - d. Maintain the decorum and dignity becoming a judicatory of the church of Christ.
 - e. Present at the annual Stated Session the State of Religion Report.
 - f. Appoint subsequent to consultation with the stated clerk, temporary clerks and tellers for each annual Stated Session.
 - g. Preside at all meetings of the Executive Council.
 - h. Personally meet not less than twice with the Visionary Leader and the Coordinator/Administrator to inquire about his or her work in the terms of joys,

- frustrations, needs, and progress toward the achievement of goals. These meetings will take place seasonally, and are in addition to the official annual review of his or her work by the Personnel Committee of Regional Synod.
- i. Meet with other synod staff as necessary or when requested.
 - j. Be a member of the personnel committee who will review the work and progress of Regional Synod staff.
 - k. Have a desire to fulfill this office to the best of his/her ability and will provide leadership to the Regional Synod.
2. The vice president will:
 - a. Assume the duties of the presiding officer at the request of, or in the absence of, the president.
 - b. Assume the responsibilities of the president upon the leaving of the incumbent president.
 - c. Be a member of the Personnel Committee and will meet with the Visionary Leader, the Coordinator/Administrator, and other synod staff as necessary or when requested.
 - d. Have a desire to fulfill this office to the best of his/her ability and will provide leadership to the Regional Synod.
 3. The immediate past president will:
 - a. Remain a member of the Executive Council and Personnel Committee.
 - b. Meet with the Visionary Leader, the Coordinator/Administrator, and other synod staff as necessary or when requested.
 4. The stated clerk will:
 - a. Notify each classis of place and date of the meeting for the annual Stated Session by October 1 of the previous year.
 - b. Notify all delegates, 21 days prior to Regional Synod meeting, of the time, place and purpose of each Stated Session and Special Session.
 - c. Maintain an accurate record of all acts and proceedings of Synod.
 - 1) In the order of the prescribed Order of Business.
 - 2) Signed by the officers of Regional Synod.
 - d. Preserve, together with original papers.
 - 1) All Minutes of Regional Synod.
 - 2) All Actions of the Executive Council.
 - e. Prepare and distribute copies of the Minutes of Regional Synod as directed by the Executive Council.
 - f. Forward one copy of the Minutes of Regional Synod to:
 - 1) The General Secretary of the General Synod.
 - 2) Other persons or organizations when requested.
 - g. Notify all members of the Executive Council, at least ten days prior to the meeting, of the time, place and purpose of the meeting.
 - h. Forward to the respective committees of Regional Synod all pertinent documents and such materials which may pertain to their respective duties.
 - i. Have available at all sessions on the president's table ample copies of the Bylaws and one copy of the Roberts Rules of Order.
 5. The treasurer, either personally or through a designated person, will:
 - a. Receive and disburse all moneys from the several funds of Regional Synod.
 - b. Pay salaries and all proper claims for expenses incurred in the performance of Regional Synod business.
 - c. Be authorized, in consultation with the Executive Council, to manage and invest Synodical funds.
 - d. Arrange for accurate record keeping of all accounts and their transactions.
 - e. Prepare a monthly financial report and distribute this monthly report to the Executive Committee and to the Coordinator/Administrator.
 - f. Distribute an up-to-date financial report to the Executive Council at each regularly scheduled meeting or at least quarterly.
 - g. Prepare an annual report of all accounts of Regional Synod and present this report to the annual Synod stated session.

Sec. E - Additional Personnel (non-officers of Regional Synod)

1. Temporary clerks will:
 - a. Serve under the direction of the officers of Regional Synod.
 - b. Maintain an accurate journal of all Regional Synod acts and proceedings.
2. Tellers, will:
 - a. Serve the officers and delegates of Regional Synod in the distribution of materials.
 - b. Be responsible for all tabulation of votes and ballots.

Sec. F - Synod Staff

1. A Visionary Leader will be retained through its Executive Council which will be responsible for his or her job descriptions and supervision. Executive Council business involving the Visionary Leader will be done in executive session without the presence of any synod staff who may also be members of the Executive Council.
2. A Coordinator/Administrator will be retained through its Executive Council which will be responsible for his or her job descriptions and supervision. Executive Council business involving the Coordinator/Administrator will be done in executive session without the presence of any synod staff who may also be members of the Executive Council.
3. Other synod staff including part-time contract positions and partnerships with other organizations will be retained through its Executive Council in consultation with the Visionary Leader and the Coordinator/Administrator. The Executive Council will be responsible for the job descriptions. The Coordinator/Administrator will be responsible for supervision in consultation with the Executive Council unless other provision or agreement is made.
4. Synod support personnel will be retained by the Coordinator/Administrator as authorized by the Executive Council. The Coordinator/Administrator will be responsible for the job description and supervision.
5. The Visionary Leader and Coordinator/Administrator will have authority in their respective areas of responsibilities as defined by their position descriptions. In undefined areas the Visionary Leader will have responsibility and authority with the final authority resting in the Executive Council.
6. The Executive Director(s) of Manitoqua Ministries will be selected by the Manitoqua Ministries Board. One voting member of the search committee for an Executive Director will be appointed by the Regional Synod Executive Council.

ARTICLE IV - EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Sec. A - The Executive Council will have its Executive Committee composed of the following: president, vice president, stated clerk and treasurer.

Sec. B - Membership will consist of-

1. The Executive Committee and the immediate past president.
2. Two delegates who are ministers or elders from each of the classes of Synod with an effort to maintain parity between ministers and elders.
3. Additionally each classis may have an additional delegate if its membership is greater than 4000 plus one delegate for each subsequent 4000 members or portion thereof.
4. Classes will appoint its own delegates.
5. Delegates from the classes to the Council will also serve as regular classis delegates to the Synod during his or her term.
6. The chairperson of the Overtures and Judicial Business Committee, the regional synod representative to the General Synod Council, and the Executive Director of Manitoqua Ministries will serve as ex officio members without vote.

Sec. C - Terms of office

1. Terms of office of the officers on the Council will be determined by the term of the respective office.
2. Terms of office of the classis delegates will be for three years. Classis delegates may be reappointed to subsequent terms as determined by the appointing classis.

Sec. D - Meetings

1. Will be held at least semiannually at the time and place designated by the Executive Committee. Additionally the Council will meet with the annual session of the Synod as delegates to the annual session as defined in these bylaws.
2. Any four or more members may request a special meeting upon written request to the president allowing ten days for the call of any special meeting.
3. A quorum is defined as a majority of the total of the Synod officers plus the appointed delegates. Vacancies in classis appointed delegates will not count when figuring the number needed for a quorum.

Sec. E - Duties

1. The Executive Council will:
 - a. Be responsible to carry out the Mission of the Synod, to establish policy to realize the Vision of the Synod, and to continually evaluate the progress towards realizing the Vision of the Synod.
 - b. Act for Regional Synod between sessions, and on all matters referred to it by Regional Synod.
 - c. Report annually to Regional Synod concerning its actions and deliberations.
 - d. Make recommendations to Regional Synod on all matters that are not provided for elsewhere.
 - e. Act as trustee of synod funds, with authority to manage all synod 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.
 - f. Make interim appointments for vacancies in synod positions.
 - g. Serve as program committee for each session of Regional Synod as appropriate.
 - h. Be responsible for long-range plans and goals of the Regional Synod.
 - i. Approve the president's appointments for special committees.
 - j. Appoint a temporary chairperson of Regional Synod meeting in case of vacancies in offices of Regional Synod.
 - k. Retain adequate staff, including contract positions, to carry out the mission and vision of the Synod.
 - l. Establish and maintain a relationship with Manitoqua Ministries.
 - m. Receive and review annually recommendations from the personnel committee regarding the synod staff.
 - n. Appoint annually the Regional Synod delegate to General Synod. The delegate will be from the membership of the Executive Council. The Council should maintain a balance between appointing ministers and lay persons.
 - o. Approve and appoint all nominees for committee member replacements, with an effort to receive input from the classes and to maintain a balance of classes representatives on all permanent committees of Regional Synod.
 - p. Administer budgeted funds for congregational aid, e.g., Urban Ministries.
 - q. Present nominations to the Regional Synod for approval, for official Regional Synod nominations to General Synod commissions and agencies as necessary.
 - r. Receive and study the treasurer's quarterly report.
 - s. Review personally or through its representative all travel and expense vouchers relating to Regional Synod and her committees and make recommendations to Regional Synod.
 - t. Review the Ministers Salary Committee report and make recommendations to Regional Synod.
 - u. Review personally or through its representative the minutes of classes within Regional Synod bounds and make recommendations to Regional Synod.
 - v. Review all requests for leaves of absence from Regional Synod meetings and make recommendations to Regional Synod.
 - w. Be responsible for the Synod's annual budgets. It will present the full annual budget to the Regional Synod for approval.
 - x. Arrange for an annual review of the synod's prior year financial records to be completed prior to the annual session. The results of the review will be included in the committee's report to the synod.

Sec. F – Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee of the Executive Council has authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council in the case of decisions that have time constraints, provided that substantial efforts were made to contact a quorum of the Executive Council. Written notification will be provided to the Council within five days of the action.
2. The Executive Committee of the Executive Council shall act as the advisory board to the synod staff.
3. The Executive Committee of the Executive Council will act as a Nominating Committee for the purpose of presenting nominees to the synod for the office of vice-president and for president when necessary.

Sec. G – Personnel Committee

1. Members are the president, vice president, and immediate past president.
2. The purpose of the Personnel Committee of the Executive Council is to:
 - a. Facilitate communication between the synod staff and the Executive Council.
 - b. Review synod staff unless other provision or agreement is made.
 - c. Receive personnel reports on contract staff and support staff from the Coordinator/Administrator and make appropriate recommendations.
 - d. Review overall synod direction as it relates to staff, making appropriate recommendations.
3. The Personnel Committee will:
 - a. Meet individually and/or as a committee with the synod staff.
 - b. Give an annual review of the work of the synod staff to the Executive Council at its last regular meeting of the calendar year.
 - c. Make recommendations to the Executive Council concerning the synod staff's compensation, benefits, job description, performance, goals and direction of synod, etc.
 - d. Consult with the Coordinator/Administrator about contract staff and support staff concerning their performance, compensation, job description, etc.
 - e. Meet with contract and/or support staff at the discretion of the Personnel Committee or at the request of the contract/support staff person or the Coordinator/Administrator and annually give recommendations to the Executive Council when appropriate.

ARTICLE V - PERMANENT COMMITTEES

Sec. A – Permanent Regular Committees of Regional Synod will be:

1. Overtures and Judicial Business
2. Minister's Salary

Sec. B - Membership

1. The Overtures and Judicial Business Committee will consist of three ministers and two elders. Skills, especially in law, and interest will be considered.
2. The Minister's Salary Committee will consist of two laypersons from each classis.

Sec. C - Terms of Office

1. Terms of office will be three years.
2. Members are eligible for election to a second three-year term.
3. Initially terms will be staggered by lot.
4. Terms will begin when the member is appointed and will end after the last day of the annual session of the Regional Synod in the last year of the member's term.

Sec. E - Specific Duties-

1. The Overtures and Judicial Business Committee will:
 - a. Elect its own chairperson as well as other officers if necessary.
 - b. Be present at each annual Regional Synod Stated Session as determined by the committee or if requested by the Executive Committee.
 - c. Receive, consider and make recommendations on all referrals, appeals, complaints and overtures as referred by the stated clerk.
 - d. May initiate overtures for Regional Synod's consideration.

- e. Upon recommendation of the Executive Council, formulate overtures for Regional Synod's consideration.
 - f. Consider all proposed amendments in the Regional Synod's Bylaws and make recommendations to Regional Synod.
2. The Minister Salary Committee will:
 - a. Study the salaries and perquisites of the ministers serving in Regional Synod.
 - b. Report annually by way of the Executive Council such recommendations it considers necessary.
 - c. Assist each classis in its responsibility for implementing Regional Synod's action on the recommendations in accordance with the BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER, Chapter 1, Part II, Art. 7, Sec. 1g.

ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS AND SUSPENSIONS

Sec. A - These Bylaws may be amended as follows:

1. When the proposed amendment originates with and is recommended by the Executive Council,
 - a. The proposed amendment must be included in the notice of meeting to all delegates,
 - b. The Overtures and Judicial Business Committee will give its recommendation to the synod, and
 - c. Adoption must be ratified by a two-thirds vote of Regional Synod.
2. When the proposed amendment originates from the floor of an annual Stated Session,
 - a. The proposed amendment must first be approved in principle by a majority vote of Regional Synod and then be referred to the Executive Council for the specific incorporation into the Bylaws.
 - b. The Overtures and Judicial Business Committee will give its recommendation to the synod, and
 - c. At the next annual Stated Session the proposed amendment is presented for adoption by a two-thirds vote of Regional Synod.

Sec. B – These Bylaws may be suspended in whole or in part, for a whole session or part of a session, by two-thirds vote of Regional Synod.