

RULES FOR CLASSICAL PROCEDURE

for

CLASSIS WISCONSIN

of the

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

(As proposed February, 2024)

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I. Convening and Constituting of Classis.

- A. Classis shall convene the last Saturday of February and the last Tuesday of September at 9:00 a.m. For weighty reasons given, the Executive Team may change the date and time of the regular meeting or call special meetings.
- B. The September meetings of Classis shall be held by rotation in all the churches. The February meetings shall be held at a convenient central location within the Classis. Pursuant to Article 40-b of the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (“Church Order”) Classis has determined that holding meetings every four months is rendered impractical due to the great distances within Classis.
- C. The council of each church shall delegate a minister, an elder, and a deacon to Classis. Emerging churches may delegate up to three office bearers to Classis. If a church is without a minister, or the minister is prevented from attending, another elder shall be delegated in place of the minister. Office bearers who are not delegated may also attend Classis and be given an advisory voice. (Church Order Art. 40a)
- D. Preparations
1. Classis meetings shall be announced to the Councils and Classical functionaries at least eight weeks in advance. Such announcement shall include information about the location of meeting agendas on the Classis website. Except in emergencies, rescheduled or special meetings require the same notice.
 2. The Council of the church where Classis meets shall make necessary arrangements for the meeting, including meals and lodging for delegates, observers, and invited guests, as necessary. Costs of the meetings shall be paid by Classis.
 3. An agenda, including all matters of business, shall be published on the Classis website no later than four weeks prior to the meeting. Reports, overtures, and other matters for the Agenda shall be provided to the Stated Clerk at least six weeks prior to the meeting. No matter outside of these parameters shall be placed on the agenda, nor shall any matter outside these parameters be taken up at a Classis meeting except by two-thirds vote of the delegates. The Agenda shall be available on the Classis website without password protection; however, any documents required to be kept confidential shall be identifiable as protected so that delegates and office bearers are able to access them.
- E. No regular meeting of Classis shall be declared constituted unless two-thirds of the churches are represented by at least one delegate. A Classis *contracta* may be called if necessary due to justifiable circumstances, determined in consultation with the Synodical deputies. A quorum for a Classis *contracta* shall be half the churches of Classis plus one. Any classical decision requiring the concurrence of the synodical deputies shall be made in the presence of delegates from all the churches which are members of the classis in which the action is being taken.

II. Classis Meetings

- A. The pastor of the host church shall (1) call the meeting to order; (2) begin Classis meetings with prayer, worship, and gospel proclamation so as to support and encourage the office bearers; (3) request the presentation of credentials; and (4) declare Classis constituted. If the host church is vacant or the pastor is unable to fulfill hosting duties, the host church may either arrange for those duties to be fulfilled by a delegate from the host church or, at least four weeks prior to Classis, request that the Administration Team appoint another person to do so.
- B. The Chair of the day and Vice Chair of the Day shall at all times exercise their duties as provided in these Rules. When a point of order is raised, the Chair must make a ruling at once. The ruling may be reversed by a majority vote if any member appeals to the floor.
- C. Subject to the provisions of Section I.D.1 and I.D.3 of these Rules, the following matters are legally before Classis and may be acted upon:
 - 1. Reports of committees and officers of Classis.
 - 2. Subject to policies and guidelines of the Administration Team, reports of delegates to denominational boards and World Renew.
 - 3. Overtures from Councils of Classis.
 - 4. Appeals and protests by Councils or individual members of Classis who cannot yield to Classical or Council decisions and who have given notice of such appeals or protests, together with a copy of the same, to the body concerned.
 - 5. Matters arising out of questions prescribed in Article 41 of the Church Order concerning requests for advice or help from the Councils of Classis.
 - 6. Subject to policies and guidelines of the Leadership Development Team, examination of candidates for the ministry and of applicants for Classical licensure to exhort or Colloquium Doctum.
 - 7. Any other matters not conflicting with the Church Order which Classis by majority vote may decide to consider.
- D. Meetings shall be conducted according to the guidelines in Appendix A.
- E. Meetings of Classis shall be open to the public, unless Classis by a majority vote decides to meet in executive session (which is open to all office-bearers and delegates), or in strict executive session (which is open to the delegates only). Classis may enter an executive session in unusual or delicate situations. Classis may enter a strict executive session in very unusual situations when such a course is dictated by due regard for personal honor or for the welfare of the church. Any delegate or office-bearer who is personally involved in the matter under discussion shall absent themselves voluntarily or if Classis so rules. Any report and decision addressed in executive or strict executive session should include a recommendation regarding what is to be included in the public record, subject to approval by the body. The minutes of the executive sessions shall be read in open session and shall be published unless Classis decides otherwise.
- F. Delegates should not leave the assembly without notifying the Chair.

III. Officers and Their Duties.

A. Chair of the day.

1. The Vice-Chair of the previous meeting of Classis shall serve as the Chair of the day. Ordinarily the same person shall not serve twice in succession
2. The duties of the chair of the day are as follows:
 - a. Welcome the delegates and guests of Classis and respond to greetings received, or appoint a delegate to Classis for this purpose.
 - b. Request those delegated to Classis for the first time sign the Covenant for Office Bearers.
 - c. Appoint a Committee of the Day to examine credentials and report on any matters contained on those credentials.
 - d. Communicate the process for delegates to be reimbursed for travel expenses from the Treasurer.
 - e. Explain the business to be transacted, expedite matters as much as possible, and see to it that everyone observes the rules of order and maintains decorum.
 - f. Recognize the right of the other office bearers of Classis who are present but are not delegated to exercise an advisory voice, and extend the same privilege to other ministers and office bearers present.
 - g. Place before Classis every motion that is made and seconded and clearly state every question before a vote is taken.
 - h. Declare all reports which contain information only to be received as information.
 - i. Remain impartial on any pending question. If the Chair desires to speak to any pending question, he or she shall relinquish the chair to the Vice-Chair while doing so and for the duration of the particular debate. The Chair may speak, while holding the chair, to state matters of fact or to inform Classis regarding points of order.
 - j. Exercise as needed the prerogative of declaring a motion out of order. In case a ruling is disputed, Classis shall sustain or reject the ruling by majority vote.
 - k. Seek to include prayer for the ministries of the church as an integral and meaningful part of the proceedings of Classis, including by providing that all sessions of Classis be opened with prayer.
 - l. Lead the assembly in prayer at the close of the meeting.
3. As a member of Classis, the Chair retains the right to vote when a vote is taken by roll call. The Chair does not have this right when the vote is by acclamation. In case of any tie vote, including when the Chair abstains from voting, the motion is lost.
4. The Chair shall not preside in any matters that concern himself or herself.

B. Vice-Chair of the day.

1. The ministers shall serve as Vice-Chair of the day in rotation, or a Vice-Chair may be elected from among the delegates.
2. The duties of the Vice-Chair are as follows:
 - a. Call the meeting to order in the absence of the Chair.
 - b. Preside when the Chair desires to be relieved, when a matter pertains particularly to the Chair, or when the Chair is unable to serve.

C. Stated Clerk

1. Classis shall elect one of its office bearers or former office bearers to serve as Stated Clerk for a term of three years. Classis shall elect an alternate for a similar term who shall assume the duties of the office when the Stated Clerk cannot serve. If the Stated Clerk should remove from the Classis, the alternate shall fill the office until the expiration of the term as alternate.
2. The duties of the Stated Clerk are as follows:
 - a. Keep an exact record of the proceedings of Classis. The record shall contain:
 - i. Opening and closing of all sessions and roll-call.
 - ii. All main motions whether carried or lost; all points of order and appeals, whether sustained or not.
 - iii. All reports and decisions of Classis.
 - iv. The names of non-members who address Classis.
 - v. The names of any delegate who desires to register a negative vote on a main motion that has been approved by Classis.
 - vi. Any documents, part of debate, or address which Classis decides by majority vote to insert in the record.
 - vii. Notwithstanding the above, the record shall not contain any rejected motion except main motions nor any motion that was withdrawn.
 - b. Provide for the announcement of Classis meetings as required in Section I.D.1.
 - c. Create and ensure publishing of an agenda as provided in Section I.D.3.
 - d. Timely submit to the Administration Team all protests and appeals so that a committee of pre-advice may be appointed if necessary.
 - e. Recommend to Classis at the time of the September meeting a Certified Public Accountant to audit the financial records of Classis.
 - f. Publish the minutes of Classis meetings on Classis website within two weeks after the date of the meeting.
 - g. Serve on the Executive Team.
 - h. Conduct all correspondence of Classis, and keep the files of Classis complete and in good order.
 - i. Serve as custodian of Classical archives and work as the liaison with the denominational Historical Committee and Heritage Hall collection.
 - j. Upon being informed of acceptance of a call by a pastor in Classis, send to the Council of the Church whose pastor is leaving: (i) copies of the Ministerial Credentials form, (ii) the Letter of Call, and (iii) and a reminder of the need to request Classis for a counselor during their vacancy..
3. The Stated Clerk shall be remunerated for his or her work as determined by Classis upon the recommendation of the Administration Team.
4. Stated Clerks who are not delegated to a Classis meeting may have the floor to advise Classis.

D. Treasurer

1. Classis shall elect a Treasurer for a term of three years. Classis shall elect an alternate for a similar term who shall assume the duties of the office when the Treasurer cannot serve. If the Treasurer should no longer be a member of a congregation of Classis, the alternate shall fill the office until the expiration of the term as alternate.
2. The duties of the Treasurer are as follows:
 - a. Furnish an adequate surety bond, the premium to be paid by Classis.
 - b. Accurately record and conduct all financial matters as directed by Classis, including all cash received and disbursed, fund balances, and other balance sheet items.
 - c. Pay the traveling expenses of delegates to Classis and members of Classical committees and officers, when requested, according to a schedule determined by Classis.
 - d. Receive and disburse all funds sent in payment of Classical Ministry Shares and contributions sent for causes recommended by Classis.
 - e. Place all funds in a depository approved by Classis and make all payments by check.
 - f. After consultation with the committees, present at the September meeting of Classis a budget for the following fiscal year, along with a recommendation regarding ministry shares needed to meet the budget
 - g. Furnish a complete financial report at the February meeting of Classis.
 - h. Submit all books and records to the auditor appointed by Classis.
 - i. File the proper quarterly and annual payroll reports.
3. The Treasurer shall be remunerated for his or her work as determined by Classis upon the recommendation of the Administration Team.
4. Treasurers who are not delegated to a Classis meeting may have the floor to advise Classis.

IV. Classis Teams

A. Generally

1. Classis Wisconsin operates under a “three-team structure,” with three standing committees and an executive team. The three standing committees consist of a Leadership Development Team, a Church Planting and Renewal Team, and an Administration Team.
2. Each standing committee shall consist of at least six members, two of whom are from each Leadership Cluster. (See Appendix B.) Standing committees with more than six members should consider geographical balance when possible, but other factors (including expertise, gender, age, race and ethnicity) may also be considered.
3. Membership of each standing committee shall be open to any member in good standing of a congregation of Classis Wisconsin.
4. Members of each standing committee shall be elected by Classis at its September meeting and shall serve staggered three-year terms. To ensure terms are staggered, at the time of the initial elections to the standing committees, 1/3 of the members shall serve a one-year term, 1/3 a two-year term, and 1/3 a three-year term. Unless the members of the standing committee unanimously agree to another method (including self-selection), the choice of which members shall serve a one-, two-, or three-year initial term shall be by lot.
5. In case of a vacancy, each standing committee may appoint a member to serve until the following September Classis meeting. The appointee shall be eligible to be elected to serve the balance of the term at that meeting.
6. Each standing committee shall appoint a chair.
7. Subject to these Rules and the Classis Ministry Plan, the standing committees may organize themselves as they see fit and develop policies and procedures related to their work.
8. Each ministry team is responsible for developing an annual budget proposal related to the duties under its purview. The budget proposal shall be submitted to the Treasurer by July 15 of each year.
9. Each ministry shall provide a report at least annually to Classis outlining its work and how that work fulfills its duties and aligns with the Classis Ministry Plan.

B. Leadership Development Team

1. The primary duty of the Leadership Development Team is to focus on the education and training of office bearers and congregants throughout Classis. It does this by:
 - a. Ensuring the February meeting of Classis is intentionally focused on such education and training.
 - b. Providing for breakout sessions for pastors, elders, and deacons at Classis meetings.
 - c. Utilizing the Leadership Clusters to organize support and training for Elders and Deacons.
2. Additional duties of the Leadership Development Team shall be as follows:
 - a. Encourage the congregations of Classis to be diligent in identifying candidates for further education, leadership roles, and ordained pastoral ministry.
 - b. Arrange ministry training opportunities for Classis.
 - c. Oversee the Leadership Development Network of Classis.
 - d. Oversee and administer the Student Fund to assist those preparing for ordained pastoral ministry.
 - e. Work with congregations and the denominational Candidacy Committee to shepherd appropriately gifted individuals through the process toward ordination as Ministers of the Word.
 - f. Work with congregations to shepherd appropriately gifted individuals through the process toward ordination as Commissioned Pastors.
 - g. Work with congregations to assist appropriately gifted individuals in obtaining a licensure to exhort in Classis Wisconsin.
 - h. Oversee and arrange for all Classical examinations, including maintaining rules and best practices for examinations and licensure.

C. Church Planting and Renewal Team

1. The primary duty of the Church Planting and Renewal Team is to instill a vision and provide effective leadership for the work of church renewal and new church development within Classis. It does this by:
 - a. Developing and implementing a Classis-wide church planting and outreach strategy.
 - b. Encouraging and empowering the churches of Classis to multiply.
 - c. Challenging Classis to meet needs beyond local congregations, especially church plants.
 - c. Providing outreach resources to local congregations.
 - d. Supervising and maintaining all personnel, property, and ministries of church plants within Classis when such church plants are a direct ministry of Classis rather than under the supervision of a “parent congregation.”
 - e. Maintaining, overseeing, and publicizing a New Church Development fund, including maintaining and updating policies related to the fund.
 - f. Overseeing and encouraging regional pastor groups within the Leadership Clusters.
 - g. Annually measure and analyze church health using the Church Pulse survey or a similar survey.
2. Additional duties of the Church Planting and Renewal Team shall be as follows:
 - a. Oversee and revitalize Church visitation through the Leadership Clusters, including appointing church visitors pursuant to Article 42-b of Church Order.
 - b. Appoint and oversee regional pastors pursuant to Article 42-c of Church Order.
 - c. Work with and support the Leadership Development Team in conducting seminars and training related to outreach.
 - d. Cooperate and partner with denominational outreach and renewal ministries and organizations, including regional team leaders.

D. Administration Team

1. The Administration Team shall provide for the administrative needs of Classis. It does this by:
 - a. Fulfilling any and all duties of a Classical Interim Committee as set forth in Church Order, except such duties that have been explicitly delegated elsewhere in these Rules.
 - b. Overseeing and carrying out all nomination processes within Classis.
 - c. Appointing classical counselors to provide advice to any church in the process of calling a minister of the Word, as provided in Article 42 of Church Order.
 - d. Maintaining appropriate oversight over the financial aspects of Classis, including setting or recommending rates of remuneration and maintaining communication with the Treasurer.
 - e. Arranging for the appointment and remuneration of an Auditor, who shall (1) conduct an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards at the close of each fiscal year and during the year if the Treasurer is replaced; and (2) submit a written audit report and opinion at the September Classis meeting.
 - f. Appointing and overseeing study committees and pre-advice committees.
 - g. Creating and implementing policies and guidelines related to reports or addresses to Classis by denomination or Classically approved causes.
 - h. Creating and implementing policies and guidelines related to Classical approval of various causes.
 - i. Taking all necessary actions related to matters on Classis credentials not able to be dealt with by the Committee of the Day.
2. The Administration Team shall maintain and support the value of communication within Classis, continually holding it as a primary, necessary value for working in community. It does this by:
 - a. Establishing and monitoring policies and guidelines related to reports to Classis, including empowering the Stated Clerk to enforce deadlines contained in these Rules or in said policies.
 - b. Providing for the continuation of the monthly Classis newsletter.
 - c. Developing a Rolling Action Items List (RAIL) to assist with communications and deadlines.
3. The Administration Team shall serve as the primary contact for Camp Calvin, Inc., an independent, non-profit public charity which serves as a ministry of Classis Wisconsin, and shall ensure that the Board of Directors of Camp Calvin (1) maintains a Camp that promotes Christian teaching from a Reformed perspective on Scripture, (2) reports annually on its activities and ministry, and (3) governs itself and manage its finances in a way that promotes its purpose and does not detract from the ministry.

E. Executive Team

1. The Executive Team shall consist of the following members:
 - a. The chair of the Leadership Development Team.
 - b. The chair of the Church Planting and Renewal Team.
 - c. The chair of the Administration Team.
 - d. The Stated Clerk.
2. The Executive Team shall have the following duties:
 - a. Plan a worship service and fellowship for the entire Classis in conjunction with the February meeting, ordinarily to be held on the Friday evening prior to said meeting.
 - b. Ensure Classis functions within the parameters of these Rules and receive and make recommendations to Classis for amendments thereto.
 - c. Act on behalf of Classis between meetings.
 - d. Supervise the Stated Clerk & Treasurer.
 - e. Assess the Ministry Teams of Classis and encourage the fulfillment of their mandates.

Appendix A

Guidelines for the Conduct of Classis Meetings

1. Classification of motions according to precedence

a. Privileged motions

	Second Needed	Amendable	Debatable	Required Vote	Interrupt Speaker?
i. Adjourn	yes	yes	no	$\frac{1}{2} + 1$	no
ii. Recess	yes	yes	no	$\frac{1}{2} + 1$	no

b. Subsidiary motions

	Second Needed	Amendable	Debatable	Required Vote	Interrupt Speaker?
i. Lay on the table	yes	no	no	$\frac{1}{2} + 1$	no
ii. Call the question	yes	no	no	$\frac{1}{2} + 1$	no
iii. Limit debate	yes	yes	no	$\frac{1}{2} + 1$	no
iv. Defer to a time certain	yes	yes	yes	$\frac{1}{2} + 1$	no
v. Refer to committee	yes	yes	yes	$\frac{1}{2} + 1$	no
vi. Amend	yes	yes	*	$\frac{1}{2} + 1$	no
vii. Postpone indefinitely	yes	no	yes	$\frac{1}{2} + 1$	no

*if main motion was debatable

c. Main motions (no order of precedence)

	Second Needed	Amendable	Debatable	Required Vote	Interrupt Speaker?
i. Main motion (gen. business)	yes	yes	yes	$\frac{1}{2} + 1$	no
ii. Take from the table	yes	no	no	$\frac{1}{2} + 1$	no
iii. Reconsider	yes	yes	no	$\frac{1}{2} + 1$	no
iv. Rescind	yes	yes	*	$\frac{2}{3}$	no
v. Special order of business	yes	yes	yes	$\frac{2}{3}$	no

*if main motion was debatable

d. Incidental motions (no order of precedence)

	Second Needed	Amendable	Debatable	Required Vote	Interrupt Speaker?
i. Point of order	no	no	no	chair	yes
ii. Appeal chair	yes	no	*	½ + 1	no
iii. Suspend rules	yes	no	no	½ + 1	no
iv. Object to consideration	no	no	no	2/3	yes
v. Rules inquiry	no	no	no	chair	yes
vi. Request for information	no	no	no	chair	yes
vii. Withdraw motion	no	no	no	½ + 1	no

*if main motion was debatable

2. Additional rules related to motions.

- a. No motion shall be acceptable if it conflicts with the Church Order, or is contrary to Scripture as interpreted in our Forms of Unity.
- b. Motions to amend must be germane to the main motion and may not nullify the main motion.
- c. A motion to reconsider (to propose a new debate and a new vote on a question) or to rescind (to annul or reverse a previous) may only be made and seconded by a delegate who voted with the prevailing side in the original voting.
- d. A succeeding Classis may alter the stand of a previous Classis or 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.
- e. At the request of one or more members of Classis, a motion consisting of more than one part shall be divided and voted upon separately. Appeal of such request requires a motion, a second, and a majority vote of Classis.

3. Discussion

- a. A speaker, to obtain the floor, must be recognized by the Chair.
- b. If any delegate has spoken twice on a pending issue, others who have not yet spoken twice shall be given priority by the Chair.
- c. During debate, the task of defending the recommendations of a committee shall rest primarily upon the committee chair or delegate, who shall have precedence over every other speaker, and shall not be limited as to the number or length of their speeches.
- d. When the Chair believes that a motion under consideration has been debated sufficiently, he or she may propose cessation of debate. If a majority of Classis sustains this proposal, discussion shall cease and the vote shall be taken.

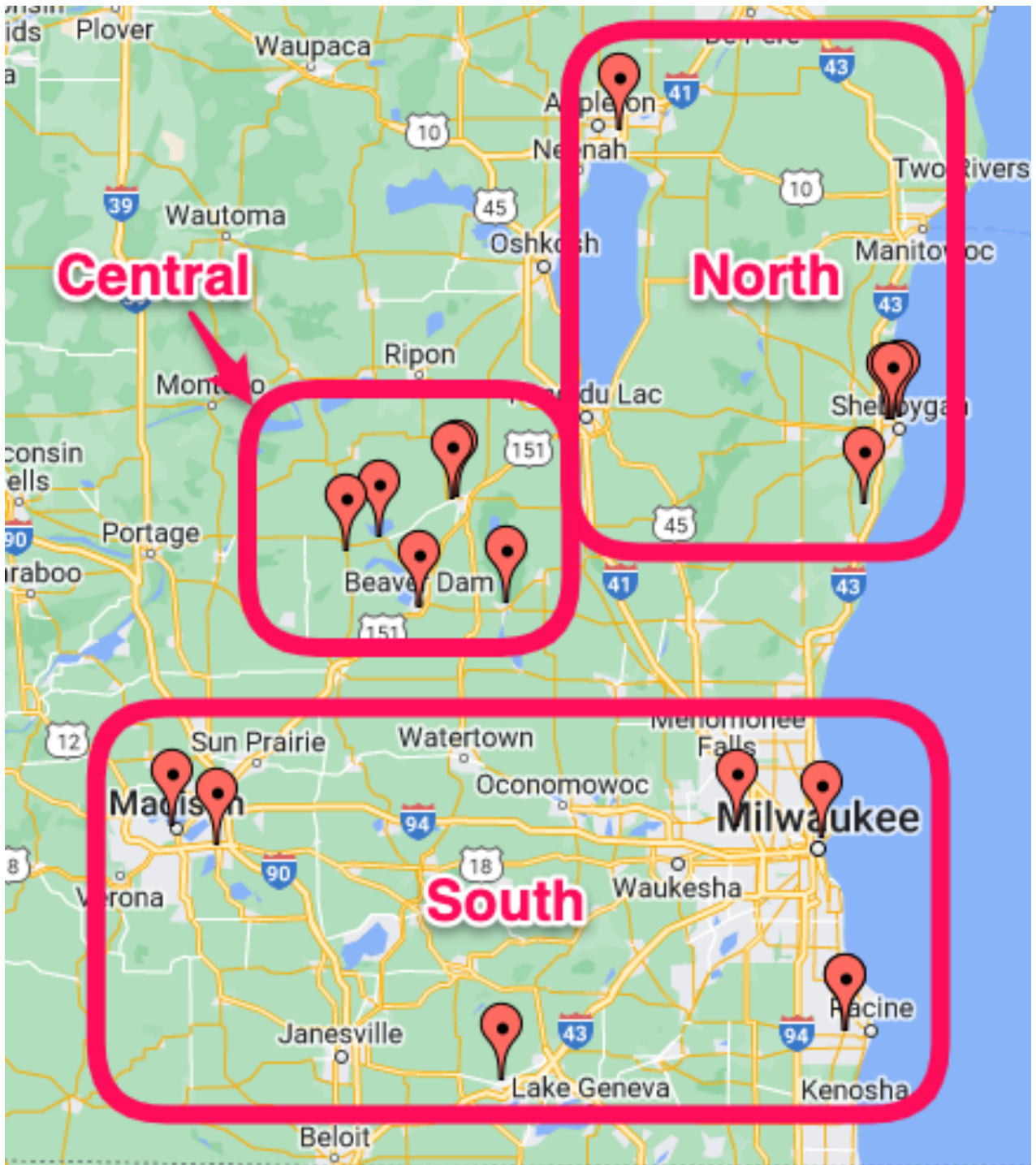
4. Voting

- a. Ordinarily, votes shall be by voice.
- b. If the Chair is unable to determine from the yeas and nays which opinion has prevailed, or if the Chair's judgment is questioned by any member of Classis, the Chair shall ask the members to vote by the raising of the right hand.
- c. In delicate cases of discipline and other matters of a critical nature and of great importance, the Chair, in his or her discretion, may conduct a vote by ballot.

- d. As a member of Classis, the Chair retains the right to vote when a vote is taken by roll call. The Chair does not have this right when the vote is by acclamation. In the case of any tie vote, including when the Chair abstains from voting, the motion is lost.
5. The Chair shall not preside in any matters that concern himself or herself. (When matters concerning the Chair come up, the Chair shall relinquish the Chair to the Vice-Chair until the matter is concluded.)
 6. 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.
 7. Delegates may ask to have their negative vote recorded. Such requests shall be made as soon as practicable after the vote is taken.
 8. These guidelines may be suspended, amended, revised, or abrogated by a majority vote of Classis.

Appendix B

Leadership Clusters



Appendix C

Diagram of Three-Team Structure



Executive Team

- Consists of:
 - Chair of Administration Team
 - Chair of Leadership Development Team
 - Chair of Church Planting & Renewal Team
 - Stated Clerk

• Duties

- Acts on behalf of Classis between meetings
- Prepares Classis Meeting Agendas
- Supervises Stated Clerk & Treasurer
- Assesses the Ministry Teams of Classis and encourages the fulfillment of their mandates
- Holds the Classis to its shared commitments as represented by the Rules of Procedure