

***Reformed Church in America – Book of Church Order  
Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14. Commissioned Pastors***

**Sec. 1.** A commissioned pastor is an elder who is trained, commissioned, and supervised by a classis for a specific ministry within that classis that will include the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments. The commission shall be valid for the period of assigned service.

**Sec. 2.** A consistory may recommend a confessing member of a Reformed church to the classis as a candidate to become a commissioned pastor.

**Sec. 3.** Upon acceptance of the consistory's application on behalf of a candidate, the classis shall approve and supervise a training plan for that person. The classis shall satisfy itself 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, and **10)** understanding of and adherence to pastoral ethics and practices.

**Sec. 4.** The classis shall employ standards established by the General Synod Council in determining a candidate's ministerial competence.

**Sec. 5.** Upon satisfaction by the classis of the candidate's ministerial competence, 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.

**Sec. 6.** The classis shall assign a mentor for each commissioned pastor for the period of training and ministry.

**Sec. 7.** The commissioned pastor shall be authorized to preach the Word and celebrate the sacraments. The classis may authorize the commissioned pastor to any or all of the following functions:

- a.** Serve as presiding officer of the consistory, at the request of a consistory or with its consent, under the supervision of the classis supervisor.
- b.** Preside at the ordination and installation of elders and deacons.
- c.** Perform a service of Christian marriage when approved by consistory and subject to state and provincial law.

**Sec. 8.** The commissioned pastor shall be a temporary member of classis, but shall not serve as an elder delegate, during the period of commissioned service.

**Sec. 9.** The classis shall evaluate the performance of the commissioned pastor at least annually.

**Sec. 10.** Upon completion of the authorized ministry by a commissioned pastor, the classis shall provide to that person a written statement of the training received and the ministry that was performed.

**Sec. 11.** The commissioned pastor shall remain a member of a local church, but is amenable solely to the discipline of the classis as set forth in Chapter 2, Part I, Article 3 of the *Book of Church Order*, for the period of commissioned service.