

Report of the Professorate

Recognizing the 239-year relationship of the General Synod professors to the Reformed Church in America (RCA), the professorate welcomes the opportunity to update the General Synod on the status of our ministry of teaching within the RCA, and our ministry to represent the living tradition of the church in the preparation and certification of candidates for its ministry.

Current Members of the General Synod Professorate

Rev. Dr. Chad Pierce, moderator
Rev. Dr. Carol Bechtel
Rev. Dr. Jaeseung Cha
Rev. Dr. Micah L. McCreary

Activities and Involvement

Members of the professorate were involved in a number of denominational activities and conversations over the past year.

Commission on Theology

General Synod 2022 instructed the Commission on Theology, in consultation with the General Synod Professorate, to “examine whether the conditions surrounding Russia’s unprovoked war against Ukraine meet the criteria for a declaration of *status confessionis*, a full break in communion, due to the gravity of the breach of faithfulness to the gospel by any Reformed or Lutheran communion supporting Russia’s (and Belarus’s) war against Ukraine” (*Minutes of General Synod 2022*, ONB 22-9, pp. 111-112).

The General Synod Professorate examined the matter of *status confessionis*, or a full break in communion with any Reformed or Lutheran communion supporting Russia’s (and Belarus’s) war against Ukraine. To this end, we recommended to the Commission on Theology an excellent article on *status confessionis* from the Encyclopedia of Christianity, which, in summary, stated that churches can find themselves in *status confessionis* when their words and actions contradict the gospel of grace in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We recommended that the Commission on Theology stand ready to further explore *status confessionis* and other options along with the chief ecumenical officer and the Commission on Christian Unity.

Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team

The professorate is represented on the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team (CPAT) by Rev. Dr. Micah McCreary, who participated in the team’s January meeting in Orlando, Florida.

Pastoral Formation Oversight Board

The General Synod professors were represented and participated in all the Pastoral Formation Oversight Board (PFOB) meetings. Some of the topics PFOB covered this year included (for more information, refer to the report of the PFOB):

- Implications of the Certificate of Readiness for Examination if the *Book of Church Order* changes proposed by PFOB last year and adopted by General Synod 2022 receive approval from two-thirds of the classes and a subsequent declarative vote from General Synod 2023. This includes communication to students currently under care as well as communication to classis stated clerks.
- The amount and division of the theological education assessment.
- Coursework between the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA), New Brunswick Theological Seminary, and Western Theological Seminary.
- How to handle the CPE (clinical pastoral education) requirement for MFCA candidates.
- Continuing education for pastors.
- The current state of commissioned pastor education in the RCA.

General Synod professor Rev. Dr. Chad Pierce was assigned to a PFOB sub-team that will discuss the current *Book of Church Order* definition of a commissioned pastor and consider a potential office of commissioned pastor.

General Synod Professor News

We celebrate the promotion of Dr. Jaeseung Cha to full professor at New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

We are eager for new colleagues to join us, and we look forward to resuming the regular rhythm of our life together that we enjoyed before the pandemic. All the members of the professorate are very busy as individuals serving in our various capacities with and for the RCA.