Annexure B

SYNODAL TASK TEAM LEGAL MATTERS

PROVISIONS

to be presented at the session of the

Northern Synod in October 2026

PREFACE

Jesus Christ is the only Lord, and he is Head of his Church. The church is governed by his Word and his Spirit and the Lord calls people to serve him there. It is foundational to canon law that Jesus Christ is Head of the Church and directly rules the Church. Jesus Christ's reign cannot be detached from his humility and service.

A church order with regulations and provisions is the product of the reflections of people of faith on the work in the Church to which all are called. A church order is the product that resulted, at a point in history, when people listened to the Word and, led by the Holy Spirit, composed an order for the work of the Church in their time

The Church Order can never be isolated from the past. The insights from the past continue to throw a light of knowledge on the present, and this challenges the Church always to listen afresh and to work with a ministering mindset. A church order is not an infallible document, however, and each of us must always listen, again and again, to the Word of the Lord. The Church Order must constantly be revised to answer the question of whether it indeed represents the Lord's will for his Church.

This Church Order, with its regulations and additional provisions, is founded on the Word of God, the confessions of the Church, decisions of the synod, and established ecclesiastical practice. This Church Order of the Northern Synod is not offered in a rigid, prescriptive spirit, but rather as an aid. This aid must promote credibility and transparency in church assemblies and decision-making processes; strengthen mutual community; provide good order and legal certainty; build consistency and stability and establish fairness and trust.

The Church Order, with its regulations, is the contract which congregations of the Dutch Reformed Church have made with each other by means of synods regarding the orderly channels in which the Word of God can flow freely into and through the whole of the Dutch Reformed Church. The Church Order binds us, the Northern Synod, morally and canonically, and it cannot unilaterally be changed or disregarded by church assemblies

The provisions in this Church Order are to supplement the articles of the Church Order of the General Synod (2023) and aim to be a guide and to keep us united in the process, and so to attest to how we as the Church conduct ourselves, and how also in our canon law we make visible the image of the Lord.

Thank you to each member of Synodal Legal Tast Team (SLTT) and each other role player who helped to make the publication of the Northern Synod's Church Order possible. An especial word of thanks to Rev. SA Smuts for compiling the document and checking it technically.

Rev. Hannes Bezuidenhout (Actuary)

Northern Synod 2025

Compiled by the actuary in collaboration with the Synodal Legal Task Team.

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For the sake of completeness, the articles and regulations of the Church Order of the General Synod of October 2023 are duplicated here. The further supplementary provisions that are applicable to the Northern Synod only, follow after the articles of the General Synod and are printed in cursive in text boxes.

Article 6

6.1 For admission to the ministry of the Word, the following is required: :

6.1.1 suitability for office[1],

6.1.2 proper theological training[2], and

6.1.3 signing of the declaration for licensing in which the signing of the Formulae of Unity are contained.

6.2 The General Synod determines the requirements for the training, the nature and supervision of theological students, and the venues where it will take place, based on the recommendation of the Curatorium.

6.3 The Curatorium is constituted by the General Synodical Moderamen in accordance with the regulations for the Curatorium and functions according to Regulation 10 for the General Curatorium.

[1] Compare Regulation 11 for the Competency of Ministers, Auxiliary Ministers and Located Ministers 4.1.1.

[2] Compare Regulation 11 for the Competency of Ministers, Auxiliary Ministers and Located Ministers 4.1.2.

Provisions 6.1 and 6.2 The Curatorium

The functioning of the Curatorium for the Faculty of Theology Pretoria is ordered according to the Regulations for the General Curatorium and the supplementary decisions

of the Joint Synodal Commission of the four synods (Northern Synod, Eastern Synod; Hoëveld Synod, and Goudland Synod) and are contained in a separate regulation.

Article 8[3]

8.1 A minister or auxiliary minister or located minister is called for ministry in a congregation by the congregation's church council, with approbation by the congregation and approval by the presbytery.

8.2 A minister or auxiliary minister is called for ministry in the denomination by a church assembly or its proxy, with approbation by the denomination and approval by the appropriate synodical legal/church order commission.

8.3 The induction of a minister, auxiliary minister or located minister for ministry in a congregation takes place following approval of induction by the presbytery or its proxy.

8.4 The induction of a minister of auxiliary minister for ministry in the denomination takes place following approval of induction by the appropriate synodical legal/church order commission.

8.5 The induction of a candidate minister takes place by the laying on of hands.

8.6 A minister/auxiliary minister who has accepted a calling to another congregation or is elected for ministry in the denomination receives a Deed of Demission from the church assembly in whose employment they were.

8.7 A minister, auxiliary minister or located minister who retires receives a Deed of Retirement.

[3] Compare Regulation 12 for the Calling, Induction, Demission and Retirement of Ministers, Auxiliary Ministers and Located Ministers

Provision 8.1 Who may be called

8.1.1 The competence of ministers and candidate ministers are defined by the Regulation for the Competence of Ministers, Candidate Ministers, Auxiliary Ministers, Located Ministers and Emeriti (Regulation 11, GS Church Order, 2023).

8.1.2 When a church council begins considering a call to ministry, the substitute minister, or a representative appointed by the presbytery, must be involved and must also be part of the further calling process and any other deliberations.

Provision 8.2 Ministers who may be called:

8.2.1 The call, induction, demission and retirement of ministers are determined by Regulation 12, GS Church Order, 2023.

8.2.2 full-time minister (Regulation 13, GS Church Order, 2023)

8.2.3 part-time minister (Regulation 14, GS Church Order, 2023)

8.2.4 tentmaker Minister (Regulation 15, GS Church Order, 2023)

8.2.5 fixed-term minister's post (Regulation 16, GS Church Order, 2023)

8.2.6 minister in a bridging ministry post (Regulation 17, GS Church Order, 2023)

8.2.7 located minister's and auxiliary minister's post (Regulation 18, GS Church Order, 2023)

Provision 8.3[3] Additional requirements for a call by the church council

A call may only be brought out

8.3.1 after the church council at a church council meeting has decided to fill a vacancy or create a post;

8.3.2 after the church council has presented the following in writing to the presbytery or presbyterial commission:

8.3.2.1 the decision of the church council to fill a vacancy or create a post;

8.3.2.2 a written confirmation that the church council has complied with Regulation 12 (Regulation for the Call, Induction, Demission, and Retirement of Ministers) and will continue to do so;

8.3.2.3 a verification of the need to fill the vacancy or create the post;

8.3.2.4 the different options considered in view of Regulation 11, GS Church Order, 2023;

8.3.2.5 the financial sustainability of the post, fully substantiated by presenting the following to the presbytery or presbyterial commission:

8.3.2.5.1 the congregation's budget for the present financial year;

8.3.2.5.2 the statement of the year's income and expenses to date;

8.3.2.5.3 the cash flow statement to date and forecast for the remainder or the fiscal year.

8.3.2.5.4 If the application is laid before the presbytery or presbyterial commission within three months of the remainder of the fiscal year, the financial documents (concept statements) for the first six months of the coming year must also be presented; and

8.3.3 after the presbytery / presbyterial commission has sought in writing the advice of the moderamen.

Provision 8.4 ***Termination of a previous responsibility and the beginning of a new one.***

8.4.1 All obligations of a congregation or a superior assembly to a serving minister, including leave and all allowances, must be finalised by the date of termination of employment.

8.4.2 The responsibility of the congregation or calling assembly or the abovementioned superior assembly begins on the date as stipulated in the in the Regulation for Calling, Induction, Demission, and Retirement. Regulation 12.9.2.6. GS Church Order, 2023. Induction must transpire within one month after acceptance of the call. If not, the church council must consult the presbytery or presbyterial commission by sending the full request of the congregation to the scribe of the moderamen.

Provision 8.5 ***Work in a congregation that is supported by the synod or in another way***

8.6.1 If in a certain congregation an unusual field of work evolves which is too extensive for the congregation to undertake on its own, the church council can apply to the presbytery/synod for financial support. If the application is approved, an agreement is drawn up. In all cases where support is received, the church council acts as employer. When a vacancy arises, the work and the subsidy are reconsidered. The work can extend over the boundaries of one congregation, if a specific category of service is involved, or in consultation with the church councils of neighbouring congregations.

8.6.2 Such work can be done collectively by more than one congregation, or by a presbytery or presbyteries.

8.6.3 One or more congregations can also support an endeavour that cannot be managed by only one congregation. In such a case, each church council appoints three persons to form, with the other congregations concerned, a preliminary advisory committee to present a list of three names of candidates to the calling assembly. Report of work done in this supported post is given to each of the supporting congregations.

8.6.4 The presbytery may also support the work. In such a case the presbyterial commission is instructed to function as a preliminary advisory committee by listing three candidate names to lay before the calling church council. Report concerning the work is then given to the presbytery.

Provision 8.6 Work outside congregational boundaries

Work undertaken by congregations outside their own congregational boundaries—even outside the DR Church—and for which a minister has to be called or appointed, must be approved by the Synod or Synodal Service Council.

Provision 8.7 Exchanging locations of ministry

Exchanging locations of ministry is conducted according to the relevant decisions of the synod or the General Synod (see Regulation 8, Regulation for the General Task Team Minister Affairs 3.2.4; Regulation 11, Regulation for the Competency of Ministers, Auxiliary Ministers, Located Ministers, Candidate Ministers, and Retirees 6.2.5; and Regulation 21, Regulation for Managing Employment Relations in cases of Unfitness and Inability 2.3.2)

Provision 8.8 A minister who can no longer work in a specific place

A minister who can no longer work in a specific place due to illness in himself/herself or illness of family members, or due to other circumstances, can approach the Synodal Service Council with a substantiated request to be made known as one who is available to be called.

Article 18

There are four church assemblies: church council, presbytery, synod, and general synod.

Provision 18.1 Ordering church assemblies

18.1.22 Telephonic assemblies, electronic assemblies and electronic voting:

18.1.22.1 Virtual and electronic church assemblies of the Northern Synod are admissible when managing urgent matters, and then on these conditions:

18.1.22.1.1 Electronic assemblies are when decisions are made by e-mail or when assemblies are conducted electronically (ZOOM; Microsoft Teams; ens.).

18.1.22.1.2 The conditions for the virtual assembly are the same as those applicable in an ordinary one, among other things regarding giving notice, agenda, quorum, and decisions.

18.1.22.1.3 The minutes of such an assembly are presented for approval at the next assembly.

18.1.22.2 The procedure with electronic voting is as follows:

18.1.22.2.1 A report is compiled concerning the matter on which the church assembly has to decide. In the report the matters to be voted on, and the manner of voting, are clearly indicated.

18.1.22.2.2 The report is sent electronically to all the members of the assembly.

18.1.22.2.3 The electronic vote's outcome is valid only if the majority of the members have shown that they accede to the proposal that has been put to the vote.

18.1.22.2.4 The minutes of such a vote are presented for approval at the next assembly.

18.1.22.2.5 All electronic assemblies and their records must comply with the requirements of Act (no. 4) on the Protection of Personal Information (POPIA).

(2013). Where a secret ballot is necessary (as when electing church council members or calling a minister), a system of anonymous voting may be used on condition that the chairperson and scribe can verify the integrity of the process.

3.2 Special provisions

3.2.1 The church council

Article 26

26.1 Each congregation has a church council to which the congregation's supervision, governance, and discipline are entrusted.

26.2 The church council consists of all the ministers, auxiliary ministers and located ministers, as well as the elders and deacons[4].

[4] Compare the Belgic Confession Article 30. The principle is upheld that all ministers, elders and deacons should serve on the church council (church council and/or decentralised church councils). Cf. Articles 26.2 and 27.1.

Provision 26.8 Terminating membership

26.8.1 A person ceases to be a member of the congregation

26.8.1.1 when he/she moves out of the congregation, provided that the member may choose to be a member of a certain congregation;

26.8.1.2 when it is approved that he/she joins another congregation of the DR Church;

26.8.1.3 when he/she has resigned in writing or has asked for his/her membership to be terminated;

26.8.1.4 when a person by word and deed disassociates himself/herself from the congregation, after investigation by and at the discretion of the church council;

26.8.1.5 when the process of church discipline has led to excommunication.

26.8.2 In all of the above cases the administrative process operates according to the stipulated Provisions in the Archive Regulations.

26.8.3 When a person resigns as a member (Prov. 26.8.1.3), the resignation is valid from the moment the church has received it. In this case, the church is regarded as the church office or the chairperson of the church council.

Article 31 To the activities of the presbytery belong:

31.1 church visitation;

31.2 supervising the congregations to ensure that church councils and congregations are fulfilling their calling;

31.3 advice and assistance to church councils;

31.4 the establishment of new congregations or disbandment of congregations on request from church councils, and the determination of congregational boundaries;[5]

31.5 dealing with matters that were lodged to the presbytery assembly in the first instance or on appeal;

31.6 the guidance of congregations where the need has developed for new faith communities within the presbytery area or in cooperation with other presbyteries;

31.7 fulfilling the collective calling and joint activities of the congregations within the presbytery, as determined by the presbytery from time to time;

31.8 the supervision and discipline of all elders, deacons, ministers, auxiliary and located ministers, including emeriti and candidate ministers, without excluding
the supervision of the church council over his office bearers (compare Article 62.2 of the Church Order);

31.9 the appointment of substitute ministers;

31.10 the appointment of a presbytery commission as his proxy, dealing with urgent matters and other mandates of the presbytery in between meetings of the presbytery;

31.11 granting limited competency on request from church councils (compare Article 48.3.5 of the Church Order).

[5] Compare Regulation 27 for the Multiplication, Unification and Amalgamation of Congregations.

Provision 31.3 Church visitation

31.3.1 To enable the presbytery to conduct its mandate to do church visitation (Church order article 31.1), the commission for visitation reports on the general spiritual state of each congregation. This report must present an overview and evaluation; minor details are not expected, but rather the report must indicate clear positive/negative tendencies that require the attention of the congregation or presbytery. Where necessary, the present situation must be compared to that of previous years.

31.3.2 In the report of the visitation committee to the presbytery, attention should be paid to, among other things, the congregation's ministry strategy, financial planning, the management of employment relations, congregation-building, the worship service, youth, ministry of mercy, and missions/witness—apart from the specific matters on which the presbytery always has to decide.

31.3.3 The commission for visitation should ensure that legitimised persons in the different congregations receive pastoral care. Mutual listening, encouragement, and joint strategic discernment between the presbytery and the church council is part of the duty of visitation. The visitation team function as partners in ministry to help the local leadership to identify opportunities and challenges.

31.3.4 Except for church registers and statements, the visitation also entails discussing the well-being of the minister(s), the relationship dynamics within the leadership, and actual ways in which the denomination can support the congregation by means or expertise and networks.

Provision 31.5 Disposal of congregational property

31.5.1 Congregational property, goods and funds are fully administrated by the church council (cf. Regulation 24, AS Church Order, 2023—Regulation for Congregational Property).

31.5.2 Congregations cannot without substantiated reasons dispose of their properties and goods. Should a church council decide to dispose of its property, it must be managed in consultation with the presbytery/presbyterial commission, and the approval of the Northern Synod or its proxy. This, assuming that the Universitas Principle applies, namely that property belongs to the Dutch Reformed Church. 31.5.3. The Northern Synod decides on how the proceeds from the sale are to be used.

Provision 31.6 Other matters for the presbytery's deliberation

The presbytery also deliberates on all matters laid before it in a proper manner by members of the presbytery and members of the congregations.

Article 33

33.1 Synods are compiled in one of the following ways, on which each synod decides by itself:

33.1.1 from one minister/auxiliary minister/located minister and one church council member (elder/deacon) as delegates from the church council from each congregation within the synodal area. Where the position of minister/auxiliary minister/located minister is vacant, an elder/deacon may be delegated in the place of the minister/auxiliary minister/located minister; or

33.1.2 if a congregation has more than one position for minister/auxiliary minister/located minister, the church council has the right to delegate more ministers/auxiliary ministers/located ministers and one more church council member (elder/deacon) for each additional minister/auxiliary minister/located minister, if the synod agrees. Where in such a congregation a position for a minister/auxiliary minister/located minister is vacant, the church council may delegate a church council member (elder/deacon) for the vacant position; or

33.1.3 an equal number of ministers/auxiliary ministers/located ministers and church council members (elders and deacons) from each presbytery in the synodal area. Synod decides the manner of delegation and the number of delegates per presbytery.

33.2 Theological training is represented in an advisory capacity by a DRC lecturer from the Faculty of Theology Stellenbosch and/or the Faculty of Theology Pretoria and/or the Faculty of Theology Bloemfontein and/or Hugenote College and/or NETS.

33.3 For each delegate, an alternate delegate is appointed. A church council member (elder/deacon) may function as alternate for a minister/auxiliary minister/located minister.

33.4 Delegates must be provided with authorisation letters.

Provision 33.2 Constitution

33.2.1 The credentials of delegates, signed by the chairperson and scribe of the church council, must reach the scribe of the synod at least two months before the date set for the session.

33.2.2 The scribe draws up an attendance list based on the credentials and presents it in written format at the start of the session.

33.2.3 At the time of the constitution of the session, the scribe draws up an attendance register.

33.2.4 The attendance register is continually updated.

33.2.5 A quorum for an assembly of the synod is two thirds of the number of delegates.

33.2.6 Persons whose names are not on the register, are not allowed to participate in the proceedings.

33.2.7 The ministers in service of the synod and those who in accordance with Art. 33.2 of the Church Order represent the theological training, attend the session in an advisory capacity.

33.2.8 The delegated minister with the longest service, who is the oldest in years, leads the opening and constitution of the synod. After that, the outgoing moderamen leads the assembly according to the agenda that has been set by the outgoing moderamen.

33.2.9 During the synod a moderamen is composed of the following members:

33.2.9.1 the moderator, assessor and actuary;

33.2.9.2 two additional members;

33.2.9.3 the chief executive officer of the Northern Synod who acts, ex officio, as scribe;

33.2.9.4 advisory: the chairperson of the SCMM of the synod.

33.2.10 Nominations are made on a nomination form prepared by the outgoing moderamen and on which the requirements for each post are outlined. Before the candidate list can be finalised, each nominee must indicate with his/her signature that he/she accepts the nomination and its requirements.

33.2.10.1 For the post of actuary the outgoing moderamen can present a list of at least three candidates that it regards as suitable for the post.

33.2.10.2 No person may be chosen for the same post by more than two assemblies of the synod.

Article 35

To the mandate and competencies of synod belong:

35.1 compiling and amending conditions and regulations for the activities entrusted to him if it is not in conflict with the Church Order,

35.2 fulfilling the collective calling and joint activities of the congregations in his area, considering Article 22 and, for this reason, also Article 26, 31 and 43 of the Church Order. The synod itself determines the nature and scope of these matters.

35.3 The training of ministers/auxiliary ministers/located ministers as determined by Article 6 of the Church Order,

35.4 building up the necessary funds given own activities and the financing of General Synod according to an accepted formula,

35.5 dealing with matters that were lodged to synod in the first instance or on appeal, 35.6 appointment of delegates to General Synod, and

35.7 accepting other confessionals in the church regulations of synod, on condition that:

35.7.1 General Synod has determined in advance that such confessional is not in conflict with Scripture, the Formulae of Unity, and the acknowledged ecumenical confessions,

35.7.2 at least two-thirds of a synod have decided in favour of this,

35.7.3 at least two-thirds of the church councils of a synod have decided in favour and obtained the necessary approbation,

35.7.4 or accepted without coercion of congregants, office bearers and other church assemblies within the synodical area and

35.7.5 It will not be regarded as an amendment to the Dutch Reformed Church's communal confessional foundation.

Provision 35.1 The Synodal Service Council

35.1.1 During the synod a Synodal Service Council (SSC) is composed of the following members:

35.1.1.1 the moderamen. (cf. Prov. 33.2.9)

35.1.1.2 one minister and one elder/deacon (with alternate delegates) from each presbytery, appointed by the different presbyteries.

35.1.1.3 The director of the synod who ex officio acts as scribe.

35.1.1.4 The executive officer of the synod.

35.1.2 Vacancies

35.1.2.1 An elder/deacon on the SSC remains a member of the SSC as long as he/she is serving as a member of the congregation that delegated him/her to the synod.

35.1.2.2 A minster remains on the SSC as long as he/she is a minister of the congregation that delegated him/her to the synod.

35.1.2.3 When a vacancy arises regarding presbyterial representatives (primary or alternate) the presbyterial commission fills the vacancy and reports to the scribe of the.

35.1.2.4 At the following SSC meeting the appointment of new representatives are ratified.

35.1.2.5 If a vacancy arises among the delegated SSC members of a certain presbytery, the ministers of the Presbyterial Commission are alternate delegates.

35.1.3 The SSC meets when necessary.

35.1.4 The Synodal Service Council (SSC)

35.1.4.1 approves the policy and budget on the basis of the key values, core business, and focus areas;

35.1.4.2 facilitates discussions within the denomination about relevant issues;

35.1.4.3 manages admission to the ministry, appeals, reorganisation of the presbyteries and the synod's involvement with theological training;

35.1.4.4 coordinates and initiates, in consultation with the presbyteries, the work within the focus areas;

35.1.4.5 controls the realisation of strategy and the attainment of goals, and reports to the synod; and

35.1.4.6 performs all the duties assigned to him by the synod between sessions of the synod.

Provision 35.3 Representatives

Persons who represent the synod in the following institutions are appointed as follows:

35.3.1 by the synod, as recommended by the moderamen:

35.3.1.1 Curatorium Faculty of Theology Pretoria: four members with alternates;

35.3.1.2 Curatorium, Electoral Assembly, and the Examination Commission for Candidate Ministers Stellenbosch: one member with alternate;

35.3.1.3 Curatorium, Electoral Assembly, and the Examination Commission for Candidate Ministers Bloemfontein: one member with alternate.

35.3.2 By the SSC as recommended by the moderamen;

35.3.2.1 The Joint Commission for the Four Synods (Northern Synod, Eastern Synod, Hoëveld Synod, Goudland Synod) (JSC) (cf. JSC regulations).

35.3.2.2 Bible Society of South Africa;

35.3.2.3 Joint Missions Mozambique;

35.3.2.4 TOISE [Transjordan]; and

35.3.2.5 SCMM Company.

35.3.3 Vacancies are supplemented by the SSC on recommendation of the moderamen.

4.3 Youth Ministry

Article 50

50.1 The youth as an essential part of the congregation is the responsibility of the church council and wider church denomination.

50.2 Ministry to the youth as covenant youth is an integrated part of the comprehensive congregational ministry. God comes to the youth through His Word, preaching, teaching, equipment, pastoral care, and service work. This congregational ministry takes place under the guidance of the offices to and through the youth.

50.3 The children of the congregation and everybody outside the Church who wants to become members of the Church must be guided in a life of discipleship, where faith is formed and supported and where teaching in the Word of God and the doctrine of the Church takes place. The goal of this ministry is growth in maturity of faith and discipleship.

Provision 50.1 Child Protection

Church councils are responsible for ensuring that all officials, catechists, and volunteers serving in youth ministry are aware of the church's guidelines regarding the protection of children. If the nature of the ministry requires it, church councils must ensure that these persons have been checked against the National Child Protection Register (as required by Act 38 of 2005).

4.10 Stewardship

Article 57[6]

Every church assembly makes the necessary provision for the careful management of material matters of the Church. It provides a yearly stewardship report to the congregation, presbytery, synod, or General Synod, whatever the case.

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[6] This article must be read with Regulation 24 for Church Goods.

Please note: Provisions 57.1-57.3 must be read with the Regulations for Church Goods (Regulation 24, GS Church Order, 2023).

Provision 57.1 Congregational property, goods, and funds

57.1.1 The church council is obliged to discharge its responsibilities regarding presbyterial and synodal work.

57.1.2 The church council may manage no funds of whatever description other than by means of the church council 's accounting system set up and operated according to accepted accounting systems.

57.1.3 The church council must annually, at the end of each fiscal year, which runs from 1 March to 28 February, prepare on the prescribed form a review of the congregational finances and the budget for the next year, to be presented to the presbytery. These statements must be signed by the chairperson and the scribe of the church council and also be certified by an auditor (CA) or commercial and financial accountant (SA, CFA or CMA) who has been registered under Article 60(2) of the Companies Act of 2008 (Act no. 71 of 2008).