

# Handbook for Presbytery Clerks



## 2023

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# DIRECTORY OF PRESBYTERY CLERKS

PRESBYTERY	CLERK NAME & ADDRESS	PHONE/E-MAIL/WEBSITE
Arizona Presbytery	Mr. Richard Wolfe 1740 Sunview Way Sierra Vista, AZ 85635	520-255-0373 richardwolfe291@gmail.com www.azpresbytery.org
Ascension Presbytery	Dr. Jay Neikirk PO Box 129 Volant, PA 16156-0129	724-847-6633 fneikirk@geneva.edu www.presbyteryoftheascension.org
Blue Ridge Presbytery	Rev. David Gilleran 709 Mulberry Rd A Martinsville, VA 24112	276-638-2050 dgilleran@embarqmail.com www.blueridgepresbytery.org
Calvary Presbytery	Mr. Mel Duncan 105 River Street Greenville, SC 29601	864-232-7621 CalvaryPresbytery@gmail.com www.calvarypres.net
Canada West Presbytery	Mr. Eric Nederlof 9803 - 181 St. NW Edmonton, AB T5T 3H9 Canada	780-991-5885 wcpclerk@gmail.com
Catawba Valley Presbytery	Rev. Scott Deneen 103 Boyd Drive Stanley, NC 28164	423-433-7377 scott.deneen@gmail.com cvppca.com
Central Carolina Presbytery	Mr. Flynt Jones 520 Willow Brook Drive Matthews, NC 28105	704-382-0371 clerk@ccpca.net www.ccpca.net
Central Florida Presbytery	Rev. Donald Mountan 9039 Village Green Blvd. Clermont, FL 34711	352-394-5180 dmountan@gmail.com
Central Georgia Presbytery	Mr. Robbin Morton 229 Providence Boulevard Macon, GA 31210	478-475-5964 rob.morton@cox.net
Central Indiana Presbytery	Rev. Taylor Bradbury 22 N. Dequincy St. Indianapolis, IN 46201	317-447-1490 taylor@newcityindy.org www.centralindianapresbytery.org
Chesapeake Presbytery	Rev. Don Dove 440 Darlington Road Havre de Grace, MD 21078	443-504-2581 statedclerk@chesapeakepca.org www.chespres-pca.org
Chicago Metro Presbytery	Rev. Kyle Edwards 5031 N. Major Avenue Chicago, IL 60630	chicagometropres@gmail.com chicagometropres.blogspot.com

# DIRECTORY OF PRESBYTERY CLERKS

PRESBYTERY	CLERK NAME & ADDRESS	PHONE/E-MAIL/WEBSITE
Columbus Metro Presbytery	Rev. Nate Conrad 6901 Erie Court Dublin, OH 43017	614-799-2300 columbusmetropres@gmail.com columbusmetropres.blogspot.com/
Covenant Presbytery	Rev. Robert Browning 4738 Walnut Grove Road Memphis, TN 38117	662-895-7035 covpressc@gmail.com www.covenantpresbytery.net
Eastern Canada Presbytery	Rev. Jeffrey Hynds 306-35 Ormskirk Avenue Toronto, ON M6S 1A8 CANADA	647-216-8535 easterncanadapresbytery@gmail.com www.easterncanadapres.ca
Eastern Carolina Presbytery	Mr. Daniel Prins 103 Brook Hollow Court Cary, NC 27513	919-463-0480 statedclerk@easterncarolina.org www.easterncarolina.org
Eastern Pennsylvania Presbytery	Rev. Thomas Keane 429 Turnberry Way Souderton, PA 18964	215-721-0170 tgkeane30@gmail.com www.easternpapres.org
Evangel Presbytery	Rev. Ken Stuart 826 Bainbridge Way Birmingham, AL 35210	256-426-9485 evangelpres@gmail.com www.evangelpresbytery.org/
Fellowship Presbytery	Rev. Chip McArthur 161 Church Street McConnells, SC 29726	803-417-1865 chipmca@gmail.com
Georgia Foothills Presbytery	Rev. Don Aldin 1041 Cold Tree Lane Watkinsville, GA 30677	706-338-0987 clerkgafoothills@gmail.com
Grace Presbytery	Mr. Sam Duncan 301 Lynnwood Circle Hattiesburg, MS 39402	601-270-1122 samjduncan@gmail.com
Great Lakes Presbytery	Rev. Neil Quinn 426 Marigold Avenue Portage, MI 49002	517-896-2668 statedclerkofglp@gmail.com
Gulf Coast Presbytery	Rev. Joe Grider 119 Raintree Blvd Niceville, FL 32578	850-341-9270 gcpstatedclerk@gmail.com www.gulfcoastpres.org
Gulfstream Presbytery	Rev. Randy Lozano 203 SW 3rd Street Stuart, FL 34994	239-471-8080 randy@treasurecoastpca.org www.gulfstreampresbyterypca.org

# DIRECTORY OF PRESBYTERY CLERKS

PRESBYTERY	CLERK NAME & ADDRESS	PHONE/E-MAIL/WEBSITE
Heartland Presbytery	Rev. Dale Thiele 5638 Goddard Street Shawnee, KS 66203	913-553-9687 dalethiele@oakhillspca.com
Heritage Presbytery	Mr. Conrad Judy 205 Chestnut Street Centreville, MD 21617	302-478-1808 heritage.pres.stated.clerk@hotmail.com www.heritage-presbytery.org
Highlands Presbytery	c/o Rev. Sean McCann 281 Edgewood Road Asheville, NC 28804	828-253-6578 clerk@highlandspresbytery.org highlandspresbytery.org
Hills and Plains Presbytery	Rev. Wesley Martin 2009 Sara Vista Drive Yukon, OK 73099	918-361-9190 clerk@hillsandplains.org www.hillsandplains.org
Houston Metro Presbytery	Rev. Lou Veiga 2402 Gray Falls Drive Houston, TX 77077	281-881-3512 pastorveiga@yahoo.com www.houstonmetropres.org
Illiana Presbytery	Rev. J. Dawson Miller 115 Meadow Lane S. Columbia, IL 62236	618-719-4057 illianaclerk10@yahoo.com
Iowa Presbytery	Rev. Larry Doughan 1007 13th Street SE Orange City, IA 51041	319-939-4806 iowapresbytery@gmail.com
James River Presbytery	Rev. Joe Brown 9205 Lyndonway Drive Richmond, VA 23229	804-543-7116 joe@wepc.org www.jrp-pca.org
Korean Capital Presbytery	Rev. Dong Woo Kim 3165 Saint Johns Ln Ellicott City, MD 21042	267-626-3989 pcakcp@gmail.com www.pcakcp.org
Korean Central Presbytery	Rev. Sungwoo Nam 600 Long Road Glenview, IL 60025-1453	773-706-2080 sungwoonam@hotmail.com
Korean Eastern Presbytery	Rev. Seogwoo Sun 1502 Basswood Grove Ambler, PA 19002	267-474-0740 pcakorean@gmail.com
Korean Northeastern Presbytery	Rev. Hoochan Paul Lee PO Box 9195 Paramus, NJ 07653	267-210-8957 pastorpaullee@gmail.com

# DIRECTORY OF PRESBYTERY CLERKS

PRESBYTERY	CLERK NAME & ADDRESS	PHONE/E-MAIL/WEBSITE
Korean Northwest Presbytery	Rev. Hyun Jin Kim 1549 Northwood Drive Fairfield, CA 94534	925-988-9136 clerk@pcaknwp.org www.pcaknwp.org
Korean Southeastern Presbytery	Rev. Ik Joon Park 66 Weatherstone Court Sharpsburg, GA 30277	910-867-0823 cdapc@hotmail.com www.pca-ksep.org
Korean Southern Presbytery	Rev. Sung Eun Yoon 4513 W. University Blvd Dallas, TX 75209	469-986-6212 sungyoon215@gmail.com
Korean Southwest Orange County Presbytery	Rev. James Suh 13320 Royalcrest Ct. #185 La Mirada, CA 90638	562-447-6947 pcakswoc@gmail.com
Korean Southwest Presbytery	Rev. Steve Seongryong Kwon 28381 Constellation Rd. Valencia, CA 91355	661-317-5372 k.swp.pca@gmail.com
Lowcountry Presbytery	Mr. David Walters, Jr. 1261 Smythe Street Charleston, SC 29492	843-296-8298 statedclerk@lowcountrypresbytery.org www.lowcountrypresbytery.org
Metro Atlanta Presbytery	Rev. Randy Schlichting 421 Sassafras Road Roswell, GA 30076	678-770-9331 randys@perimeter.org www.matlpres.org
Metropolitan New York Presbytery	Rev. James Fredere 3204 28 Avenue Astoria, NY 11102	347-366-1183 statedclerkmetronypres@gmail.com www.metronypres.org
Mississippi Valley Presbytery	Rev. Roger Collins 130 Byram Parkway Byram, MS 39272	601-990-7817 clerk@msvalley.org www.msvalley.org
Missouri Presbytery	Mr. Bob Wilkinson 1208 Summers End Drive Fenton, MO 63026	clerk@mopres.org www.mopres.org
Nashville Presbytery	Rev. Neil Spence PO Box 1006 Dickson, TN 37056	615-593-2717 nspence@rpcdickson.org www.nashvillepca.org
New Jersey Presbytery	Mr. Ric Springer P.O. Box 190 Allenwood, NJ 08720	732-267-3753 ricspringer@gmail.com www.njpresbytery.org/

# DIRECTORY OF PRESBYTERY CLERKS

PRESBYTERY	CLERK NAME & ADDRESS	PHONE/E-MAIL/WEBSITE
New River Presbytery	Rev. Kurt Gray 3965 Teays Valley Road Hurricane, WV 25526	statedclerk.newriver@gmail.com www.newriverpresbytery.org
New York State Presbytery	Dr. Arthur Mosher 107 Larchmont Drive Trumansburg, NY 14886	937-716-6163 nyspcclerk@gmail.com
North Florida Presbytery	Rev. David Burke 7183 Hanson Drive North Jacksonville, FL 32210	904-389-4043 northflstatedclerk@gmail.com www.nflpresbytery.org
North Texas Presbytery	Mr. Steve Vanderhill 6603 Town Bluff Drive Dallas, TX 75248	214-755-2028 ntpstatedclerk@gmail.com ntpresbytery.org
Northern California Presbytery	Mr. Marcel Weiland 2401 Olympus Drive Roseville, CA 95661	916-247-9557 norcalclerk@gmail.com
Northern Illinois Presbytery	Rev. Justin Coverstone 1227 W Stephenson Street Freeport, IL 61032	815-751-1274 justin.coverstone@gmail.com
Northern New England Presbytery	Rev. Per Almquist 160 Canal Street Lewiston, ME 04240	per.almquist@freegrace.us www.nnepca.org
Northwest Georgia Presbytery	Rev. Robby Baxter 3922 Abernathy Farm Way Acworth, GA 30101	404-227-3293 stated.clerk.nwgp@gmail.com https://nwgp.org/
Ohio Presbytery	Rev. Jason Piland 5746 Argyle Drive Hudson, OH 44236	615-924-7802 jason.piland@redeemerohio.org www.ohiopres.org
Ohio Valley Presbytery	Rev. Larry Hoop 422 Tater Ridge Road West Union, OH 45693	319-269-1740 clerk@ovppca.org ovppca.org
Pacific Northwest Presbytery	Rev. Nathan Chambers 1710 Kok Rd, Unit B Lynden, WA 98264	360-969-6530 clerk@pacificnorthwestpresbytery.com www.pacificnorthwestpresbytery.com
Pacific Presbytery	Rev. Jerrard Heard 29211 Stonecrest Road Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90275	310-529-2037 revjheard@netzero.net

# DIRECTORY OF PRESBYTERY CLERKS

PRESBYTERY	CLERK NAME & ADDRESS	PHONE/E-MAIL/WEBSITE
Palmetto Presbytery	Rev. Igou Hodges 1114 Blakely Court West Columbia, SC 29170	803-754-4100 lihodges@sc.rr.com www.palmettopresbytery.net
Pee Dee Presbytery	Rev. Michael Brown 124 Lynchburg Rd Kingstree, SC 29556	803-410-8328 cbcgrad@aol.com www.peedeepres.org
Philadelphia Metro West Presbytery	Mr. Paul Rich 926 Thorne Drive West Chester, PA 19382	215-696-2154 clerk@philawest.org www.philawest.org
Philadelphia Presbytery	Rev. Greg Hobaugh 4846 Pulaski Ave Philadelphia, PA 19144	215-858-5750 statedclerk@phillypca.com www.phillypca.com
Piedmont Triad Presbytery	Rev. Ethan Smith 4712 Tolley Creek Drive Winston-Salem, NC 27106	336-602-0455 ptpstatedclerk@gmail.com piedmonttriadpresbytery.org
Pittsburgh Presbytery	Rev. Lee Capper 1620 Bedford Street Cumberland, MD 21502-1052	301-729-0100 pittprespca@atlanticbbn.net www.pcapittsburgh.org
Platte Valley Presbytery	Rev. Jacob Gerber 3119 Coffey Avenue Bellevue, NE 68123	402-830-1548 jacob@harvestpca.org www.plattevalleypresbytery.org
Potomac Presbytery	Mr. Charles Robinson 7210 24th Place Hyattsville, MD 20783	240-271-6920 statedclerk.potomacpresbytery@gmail.com www.potomacpresbytery.org
Providence Presbytery	Rev. Adam Tisdale 11319 Highway 231/431 North Meridianville, AL 35759	256-665-5316 providencepresbyterypca@gmail.com www.providencepresbytery.com
Rio Grande Presbytery	Rev. Dustin Hunt 3729 Santa Rosa Avenue Las Cruces, NM 88012	505-281-4012 dustin@coramdeolc.com www.riograndepresbytery.org
Rocky Mountain Presbytery	Rev. Del Farris 3020 Vanderberg Avenue Monument, CO 80132	501-416-1983 dfarris@pcanet.org www.rockymountainpresbytery.info
Savannah River Presbytery	Mr. Glynn Dyer 1398 Waterston Drive Evans, GA 30809	706-832-0830 srpclerk@gmail.com www.savannahriverpresbytery.net



# DIRECTORY OF PRESBYTERY CLERKS

PRESBYTERY	CLERK NAME & ADDRESS	PHONE/E-MAIL/WEBSITE
Siouxlands Presbytery	Mr. Bob Shogren 677 Taft Loop South Cambridge, MN 55008	763-245-6715 bobshogren@gmail.com
South Coast Presbytery	Rev. Eric Chappell PO Box 3003 Vista, CA 92085	619-208-1638 eric.c@trinitypresoc.org
South Florida Presbytery	Rev. Damon Palmer 8380 SW 39 Court Davie, FL 33328	954-868-3660 statedclerk@sflpresbytery.org https://www.sflpresbytery.org/
South Texas Presbytery	Mr. Mike Simpson 251 Quentin Drive San Antonio, TX 78201	512-463-1873 statedclerk@southtexaspresbytery.org www.southtexaspresbytery.org
Southeast Alabama Presbytery	Rev. Kevin Corley 300 Opelika Road #3133 Auburn, AL 36831	334-315-1906 info@sealpresbytery.com
Southern Louisiana Presbytery	Rev. Kelly Dotson 12525 Saint Helena Street Clinton, LA 70722	601-988-7039 kellydotson@gmail.com www.slappca.info
Southern New England Presbytery	Mr. Ron Heald 16 Plateau Circle West Springfield, MA 01089-3204	413-302-2730 clerk@snepres.org www.snepres.org/home.php
Southwest Florida Presbytery	Rev. Freddy Fritz 19911 Bruce B. Downs Boulevard Tampa, FL 33647	813-973-2484 freddy@freddyfritz.com www.swfpresbytery.org
Suncoast Florida Presbytery	Rev. David Stewart 13275 SW Pembroke Circle North Lake Suzy, FL 34269	207-712-9826 suncoastflclerk@outlook.com www.suncoastfl.org
Susquehanna Valley Presbytery	Rev. Tucker York 1825 Old Farm Lane Lancaster, PA 17602	717-569-2151 svp.clerk@gmail.com
Tennessee Valley Presbytery	Rev. Philip Caines 1780 Stuart Road NE Cleveland, TN 37312	423-559-9595 tvpclerk@gmail.com www.tvp-pca.com
Tidewater Presbytery	Rev. David Zavadil 3249 MacDonald Road Virginia Beach, VA 23464-1717	757-420-8133 twpstatedclerk@gmail.com www.tidewater-pca.org

# DIRECTORY OF PRESBYTERY CLERKS

PRESBYTERY	CLERK NAME & ADDRESS	PHONE/E-MAIL/WEBSITE
Warrior Presbytery	Rev. Philip Ryan 502 Washington Street Marion, AL 36756	205-632-8104 philip.ryan86@gmail.com
West Hudson Presbytery	Rev. Christopher Diebold 291 Parsonage Hill Road Short Hills, NJ 07078	704-999-8056 christopher@covenantshorthills.org
Westminster Presbytery	Rev. Thomas Rickard 10199 Crescent Road Glade Spring, VA 24340	276-206-9320 thomas.rickard@sevenspringspresbyterian. www.westminsterpresbytery.org
Wisconsin Presbytery	Mr. Jason Heinen W251 N9280 Crestwood Drive Lisbon, WI 53089	920-851-6045 clerk@wisconsinpca.com wisconsinpca.com

## SYNOPSIS OF FORMS

The table below gives a rundown of forms that Presbytery Clerks send to the PCA Stated Clerk's Office and whether or not they can be emailed instead of, or in addition to, being mailed.

Please note:

- When you email us, please do not send an additional copy of the information by mail unless specifically requested.
- When emailing information, it may not be necessary to complete the form and attach it; you may use free-form to give us the necessary information. Please refer to the form in the Clerks Handbook to be sure you include all pertinent data.  
**\*All Nominations forms must be used.**
- When in doubt about where to send a form, you are welcome to make use of [records@pcanet.org](mailto:records@pcanet.org) for all communication to the PCA Stated Clerk's Office.

Form Number and Name	OK to Send by			Comments/ Special Instructions
	Email	Mail	Portal	
Minutes, Rolls, Standing Rules for RPR		X		<b>Major changes were made in 2019 to RAO 16 to how RPR materials are submitted.</b>
Rolls	X	X	X	
021 Presbytery Enrollment Report Form	X	X		
022 Official Change of Presbytery Rolls -- Ministers	X	X	X	Be sure to send a copy to the dismissing or receiving presbytery when a transfer is being reported.
023 Official Change of Presbytery Rolls -- Churches	X	X	X	
024 Official Change of Presbytery Rolls -- Names-Addresses-Phones	X	X	X	
025 Ministerial Biographical Data	X	X		
026 Supplemental Ministerial Biographical Form	X	X		
Overtures (see 047 for Format)	X	X		Signed original by mail or scan by email; also request Word file by email
049 BCO Amendments Sent Down to Presbyteries for Voting	X	X		Signed original by mail or scan by email
053 Report of Appointees to Nominating Committee and RPR*	X	X		Signed original by mail or emailed PDF
059 Summary of Nominations*	X	X		Signed original by mail or emailed PDF
060 Nominee Biographical Form*	X	X		Signed original by mail or emailed PDF
064 Report of Appointees to CoC – odd*	X	X		Signed original by mail or emailed PDF
065 Report of Appointees to CoC – even*	X	X		Signed original by mail or emailed PDF
067 Report of Appointees as Floor Clerk & Communion Elder*	X	X	X	Signed original by mail or emailed PDF

\*All Nominations forms must be used.

## DUE DATES

For forms and materials for the 50<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, June 12-16, 2023

<b>October 3, 2022</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>CHURCH CHANGES</b> for Blue Directory must be submitted. <i>Churches send changes by email or mail – changes in call must be sent in by presbytery clerk.</i>
<b>December 1, 2022</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>PRESBYTERY ROLLS</b> verify pastoral relationships and appointments to offices/committees of presbyteries. <i>Send changes by email, website, or mail; signed original not required</i>
<b>February 13, 2023</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NOMINATIONS</b> for permanent committees and agencies, special committees and the SJC (RAO 8-4.e) <b>(Forms 059, 060)</b> <i>Submit using directions on forms</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>REPORT OF REPRESENTATIVES</b> to Review of Presbytery Records (RPR) Committee and Nominating Committee <b>(Form 053)</b> <i>Submit using directions on forms</i>
<b>February 15, 2023</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>STATISTICAL FORMS</b> from churches <i>Signed original required, or input electronically over the Web</i>
<b>March 15, 2023</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>PRESBYTERY MINUTES AND RESPONSES TO EXCEPTIONS</b> (RAO 16-4, 16-7, 16-10)
<b>April 14, 2023</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Matters (including <b>OVERTURES</b> ) needing reference to the Committee on Constitutional Business, i.e. <b>PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE BCO</b> (RAO 11-6). <i>Signed original required, please also send file by email</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Report of representatives to <b>COMMITTEES OF COMMISSIONERS</b> <i>Send changes by email or mail; signed original not required</i>
<b>May 15, 2023</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Final deadline for <b>OVERTURES</b> (not needing CCB review) to be considered by the General Assembly (RAO 11-8) <i>Signed original required, please also send file by email</i>

**For Due Dates regarding end of the year information to the Stated Clerk's Office, please see page 075 in this Clerk's Handbook.**

E-mail: [ac@pcanet.org](mailto:ac@pcanet.org)

Phone: 678-825-1000

Mailing Address:

PCA Stated Clerk's Office  
1700 North Brown Road  
Suite 105  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043

## DENOMINATIONAL MEETING SCHEDULE PRESBYTERIES

**\*\*Check online at <http://www.pcaac.org/presbytery-information/> for updates.\*\***

**Arizona Presbytery:** Third Thursday and Friday of January, April, and August.

**Ascension Presbytery:** Last Saturday of January and July; last Saturday and preceding Friday evening of April; first Saturday and preceding Friday evening of November

**Blue Ridge Presbytery:** Fourth Friday and Saturday of January and April; second Saturday of August; first Friday and Saturday of November

**Calvary Presbytery:** Fourth Saturday of January and July; fourth Tuesday of April and October

**Canada West Presbytery:** First Friday and Saturday of March and October

**Catawba Valley:** Fourth Saturday of January; fourth Tuesday of May and September

**Central Carolina Presbytery:** Fourth Saturday of February and August; fourth Tuesday of May; Tuesday of the week before Thanksgiving

**Central Florida Presbytery:** Third Tuesday of January and second Tuesday of April, August, and November

**Central Georgia Presbytery:** Friday immediately preceding the second or third Saturday of January, whichever does not conflict with Martin Luther King day; second Tuesday of May and September

**Central Indiana Presbytery:** Second Friday of February, May, September, and November

**Chesapeake Presbytery:** Third Saturday of February and September; third Tuesday of May; second Tuesday of November

**Chicago Metro Presbytery:** Third Wednesday of January, April, July, and October

**Columbus Metro Presbytery:** Third Tuesday of every odd month

**Covenant Presbytery:** First Tuesday of February and October; third Tuesday of May

**Eastern Canada Presbytery:** February, March, and October

**Eastern Carolina Presbytery:** Fourth Saturday of January; third Saturday of April, July, and October

**Eastern Pennsylvania Presbytery:** Second or third Saturday of February, April, September, and November

**Evangel Presbytery:** Second Tuesday of February, May, August, and November

**Fellowship Presbytery:** Fourth Saturday of January and April; third Tuesday of September

**Georgia Foothills Presbytery:** First Saturday after the third Monday of January; third Tuesday of April and September

**Grace Presbytery:** Second Tuesday of January, May, and September

**Great Lakes Presbytery:** Second Saturday of January; Saturday before the first Sunday of May; third Friday and Saturday of September

**Gulf Coast Presbytery:** Second Tuesday of February, May, and October

**Gulfstream Presbytery:** Third Tuesday of January, April, July, and October

**Heartland Presbytery:** Friday directly preceding the final Saturday in April and that final Saturday, and first Friday in November and the Saturday directly succeeding that Friday

**Heritage Presbytery:** Last Saturday of January; second Tuesday of May; second Saturday of September and November

**Highlands Presbytery (formerly Western Carolina):** Fourth Saturday of February; first Tuesday of May; first Saturday of August; second Tuesday, unless Election Day, then first Tuesday of November

**Hills and Plains:** Second Saturday of February; second Wednesday of May and September, every other year meets two Saturdays and one Wednesday

**Houston Metro Presbytery:** Third Friday of January, second Monday of April, third Friday of August, and second Monday of November

**Illiana Presbytery:** Third Saturday of January; second Saturday of April; third Friday and Saturday of October

**Iowa Presbytery:** Second Saturday of March, July, and November

**James River Presbytery:** Third Saturday of January; second Saturday of April; third Thursday of July in the evening; second Saturday of October

**Korean Capital Presbytery:** Monday after the first Sunday of April and October

**Korean Central Presbytery:** Second Tuesday of April and October

**Korean Eastern Presbytery:** Tuesday after the second Sunday of March and September

**Korean Northeastern Presbytery:** Second Tuesday of March and September

**Korean Northwest Presbytery:** Second Tuesday of April and October

**Korean Southeastern Presbytery:** April and October

**Korean Southern Presbytery:** Third Monday and Tuesday of April; third Monday of October

**Korean Southwest Presbytery:** Tuesday after the second Sunday of March and September

**Korean Southwest Orange County:** Tuesday after second Sunday of March and September

**Lowcountry Presbytery:** Fourth Saturday of January and July; fourth Tuesday of April; first Thursday of November

**Metro Atlanta Presbytery:** Fourth Tuesday of January; first Tuesday of May; third Tuesday of September

**Metropolitan New York Presbytery:** Second week of January, March, and May; third week of September; and first week of November

**Mississippi Valley Presbytery:** First Tuesday of February, May, August, and November

**Missouri Presbytery:** Third Tuesday of January, April, July, and October

**Nashville Presbytery:** Second Tuesday of February, April, August, and November

**New Jersey Presbytery:** Third Saturday of March, May, September, and November

**New River Presbytery:** Second Friday and Saturday of January, May, and September

**New York State Presbytery:** Saturday of the third full weekend in January and May; Friday and Saturday of the third full weekend in September

**North Florida Presbytery:** Second Thursday of January, April, July, and October

**North Texas Presbytery:** First Friday of February, May, and November; fourth Friday of August

**Northern California Presbytery:** First Friday of February, May, and October

**Northern Illinois Presbytery:** Second Saturday of January; second Tuesday of May and second Saturday of September

**Northern New England Presbytery:** First Saturday of February; third Saturday of May and October

**Northwest Georgia Presbytery:** Third Saturday of January; first Tuesday of April; third Saturday of August

**Ohio Presbytery:** Last Saturday of January and July; third Tuesday of May and October

**Ohio Valley Presbytery:** Last Saturday of January; first Tuesday of May; last Saturday of July; third Tuesday of October

**Pacific Presbytery:** Fourth Saturday of January; first Tuesday of May and October

**Pacific Northwest Presbytery:** First Thursday/Friday of February, third Thursday/Friday of May, second Thursday/Friday of October

**Palmetto Presbytery:** Second Thursday of February, May, August, and November

**Pee Dee Presbytery:** January, April, July and October - host church decides between Thursday and Saturday

**Philadelphia Presbytery:** Second Saturday of February, May, and November; second Wednesday of September

**Philadelphia Metro West Presbytery:** Fourth Saturday of February; first Saturday of May; third Saturday of September; third Tuesday of November

**Piedmont Triad Presbytery:** Fourth Saturday of January, April, July, and October

**Pittsburgh Presbytery:** Last Saturday of January; first Saturday, unless the following day is Easter, then it will be the second Saturday of April

**Platte Valley Presbytery:** First Saturday of February, last Saturday of April; and a Saturday in October

**Potomac Presbytery:** Fourth Tuesday of January; third Saturday of March and November; first Tuesday of June; third Tuesday of September

**Providence Presbytery:** First Tuesday of February, May, August, and November

**Rio Grande Presbytery:** The fourth week of January, April, and August

**Rocky Mountain Presbytery:** The week of the fourth Friday in January and April; during the week of the first Friday of October

**Savannah River Presbytery:** Friday and Saturday following the third Monday of January; third Saturday and preceding Friday of July; third Tuesday of April and October

**Siouxlands Presbytery:** Fourth Thursday or Friday of January, April, and September

**South Coast Presbytery:** Fourth Saturday of January, April, and September

**South Florida Presbytery:** Second Tuesday of February, May, August, and November

**South Texas Presbytery:** Last Friday and Saturday of January, April, and October; second Friday and Saturday of August

**Southeast Alabama Presbytery:** Fourth Tuesday of January, April, and October; August meeting floats according to school opening

**Southern Louisiana Presbytery:** Fourth Saturday of January, April, and October

**Southern New England Presbytery:** Third Saturday of January and September; last Friday and Saturday of April

**Southwest Florida Presbytery:** Second Saturday of February and September; second Tuesday of May and November

**Suncoast Florida Presbytery:** Second Friday of January and September; second Tuesday of April

**Susquehanna Valley Presbytery:** Third Saturday of February, May, and November; next to last Thursday of September

**Tennessee Valley Presbytery:** Second Saturday of January; third Saturday of April; second Tuesday of July and October

**Tidewater:** First Saturday of February; second Thursday of May; first Thursday of October

**Warrior Presbytery:** Third Tuesday of January, April, and October

**West Hudson –** In the months of February, May, September, and November

**Westminster Presbytery:** Second Saturday of January, April, July, and October

**Wisconsin Presbytery:** Every fourth Saturday of April, July, and September.

### **ASSEMBLY-LEVEL MEETINGS**

#### **Administrative Committee**

Thursday and Friday of April after April 15 (except when Easter weekend), first Thursday and Friday of October, Tuesday of General Assembly week

#### **Committee on Discipleship Ministries**

First Thursday and Friday in March, third Thursday and Friday of September

#### **Covenant College**

Dates determined by the dates for fall break and spring break, with the fall meeting always scheduled on the Thursday and Friday of the week preceding the week of fall break and the spring meeting on the Thursday and Friday following the college spring break.

#### **Covenant Theological Seminary**

Last Friday of January and the following Saturday, the last Friday of April and the following Saturday, the fourth Friday of September and the following Saturday



**Mission to North America**

First Thursday and Friday of March, the fourth Thursday and Friday of September

**Mission to the World**

Second Tuesday and Wednesday of March and the last Wednesday through Friday of September

**PCA Foundation**

Meetings on Thursday and Friday in first or second week of March [primarily the first week] and third or fourth week of August [no real formula, each next date set at the meeting].

**PCA Retirement & Benefits**

First Friday in March, Second Friday in August, First Friday in November, usually on Tuesday of GA.

**Reformed University Fellowship**

First Tuesday in October and second Tuesday in March

**Ridge Haven**

Fourth Monday and Tuesday of January

**OTHER PCA COMMITTEES & AGENCIES****Cooperative Ministries Committee**

The Tuesday and Wednesday following MLK (Usually the third Tuesday and Wednesday of January)

**Committee on Constitutional Business**

Third Monday and Tuesday of April, except when Easter falls in that week

**Interchurch Relations Committee**

As needed

**Nominating Committee**

Fourth Saturday of March, except when Easter falls on that weekend

**PCA Historical Center Oversight Committee**

Last Saturday of January and July

**Review of Presbytery Records**

3-4 weeks prior to General Assembly depending on Memorial Day weekend

**Standing Judicial Commission**

First Thursday, Friday and Saturday of March, third Thursday, Friday and Saturday of October

**Theological Examining Committee**

As needed

**OTHER ASSOCIATIONS****National Association of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches**

Third Tuesday thru Thursday of November

**OTHER CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS****Church Business Administrators Conference**

First or Second Thursday and Friday of November

**Committee/Agency Coordinators Meeting**

Meeting quarterly as can be arranged

**Presbytery Stated Clerks Conference**

First Friday and Saturday of December

# **“OH NO! ... NOT ME!! ... NOT CLERK!!!”**

## **ON BEING A CLERK OF PRESBYTERY**

By Rev. James A. Smith

### Dedicatory

TO: More “decently and orderly” - that the Church Visible may better glorify “Him”; With Thanks to Marilyn for always bearing with my negatives, whatever their source but particularly those of the “Office”; and above all with praise to God for all the “positives” ...

### Forward

As most people, I tend to be a bit impatient with human faults. This trait is no less apt to express itself in my church-related dealings than in personal relationships. Over the years, exasperation would frequently be my reaction to the failures of other stated clerks, sometimes even when the shortcoming did not bother me directly.

It doesn't take much thought to realize that such a response is not very productive. A little objectivity usually reveals that we ourselves probably cause more than enough chagrin to others to remove all justification of any attitude of indignation. Sensing this it occurred to me several years ago that an instruction manual might help to lessen some of this inappropriate stress.

I was encouraged by the response of Dr. Morton Smith to my suggestion of the need for such a pamphlet, to think further about trying to produce one. At odd moments, ideas were sketched out and little-by-little the following took shape. In hopes that it will make life better for those called upon to be clerks and that, in that way as well as possibly many others, it will glorify God, I offer this booklet.

### OUTLINE

- I. A Different Perspective
- II. Sources for Guidance
  - A. *BCO* References
  - B. *RAO* References
  - C. Clerk's *Handbook*
  - D. Presbytery Standing Rules
  - E. Clerks' Conference
- III. Presbytery Duties
  - A. Keeping Minutes
  - B. Maintaining Files
  - C. Corresponding
  - D. Directing of Presbytery
- IV. GA Responsibilities
  - A. Liaison with General Assembly
    - 1. Clerk's *Handbook*
    - 2. Reporting Changes
    - 3. Annual Reports
  - B. Minutes for Review

## I. A Different Perspective

Oh no! ... Not me!! ... Not clerk!!! Have you voiced such sentiments? Maybe you've just felt them? Most, when asked to take on the position of stated clerk, probably feel that way whether it is expressed or not. If you have been asked to be the clerk of your Presbytery and feel that you aren't cut out for the job, if you are already a clerk but a bit restive or thinking there just isn't time to do the job and you're flagging in enthusiasm, please consider the following thoughts. They may help you to a new appreciation for, perhaps even joy in, carrying on.

Presbytery may have been totally off base in selecting or asking you to be clerk. Perhaps you are just not "cut out" for it. I don't know, and you may not either. If you are really convinced that this is so, I suggest you explore it with your Presbytery or some individual who may help you come to a clearer view of the calling of God for you and of the part that opportunity and willingness might play in your decision to accept or continue in the job. However, the fact that you have been selected deserves consideration as one part of the picture, which may indicate that you are meant for the job after all.

One of the basic concepts in Presbyterian government as it has developed in our tradition rises from Paul's statement in I Corinthians 14:40, "But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (NIV, "decently and in order" in the KJV). The topic under discussion is the worship service, but the principle would seem to be equally applicable to the whole function of the church and, in fact, is usually understood that way.

Thus the keeping of records and the establishing of orderly lines of communication are clearly necessary. Logic dictates then, that it is God's will for men to do these tasks. We also conclude that if God wills it, He will provide men with the gifts to do it. Time and priorities press us all, but they too must be incorporated into the recognition of the fact that what ought to be done can be done, and if I'm the one to do it, I can do it and should do it the best way I know how. Incidentally, these principles apply equally to the Session as to the Presbytery and General Assembly.

The patterns of the Old Testament abundantly reinforce these conclusions, as we can see in the "begots," the tribal lists and other records, sometimes tedious to wade through, but found to be helpful, sometimes in unexpected ways. The very existence of the Bible is clear and eloquent witness for the same conclusion. Its reliability should inspire and challenge each of us to diligence and care in all the work we do.

Jesus told his disciples that the pattern of leadership in the Kingdom was that of servanthood. This can be a very frustrating path, but to allow our "nature" to keep us from it is surely to be out of step with Him. Have you never taken on a job that you thought was simply "out of the question" only to find, in doing it, the realization of great satisfaction – even a new sense of what your calling was? Before you too hastily decide to refuse the position of clerk, resign from it, or give it only token attention, consider that the Lord may be leading you to the role in which you can most effectively glorify him. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men." Col. 3:24.

## II. Sources for Guidance

There are four places where the functions of clerks in the PCA may be presented. It is not our purpose here to elaborate on the content or to be a commentary on them, but to point them out and try to direct you to the specific locations so you may find for yourself the requirements of the office as well as the help these documents provide.

### A. *The Book of Church Order (BCO)*

It goes without saying that the basic compendium of principles for the operation of the church as we understand it is the first place we would expect to find material to help us understand the functions of the clerk. However, it is also true that we should not expect too much detail here as the more cumbersome nature of the process for change in this document, coupled with the need for flexibility in modifying job descriptions, suggest a better place for such material is a more readily amendable vehicle. Here we should find only principal matters presented.

The references in the *BCO* cover all of the courts and in some cases are limited to a specific court. However, they may be helpful to understanding the job in general and so are included here for your consideration.

The clerk is mentioned specifically in *BCO* 10-4, 13-11 and 12, 14-1 (11), 14-3, (Chapter 14 deals with the Assembly), 25-5 (dealing with the congregation), 32-3, 32-4 and 32-18 (Judicial Process). The clerk is also the reasonable agent of functions required by *BCO* 11-4, 12-7 and 8, 13-7 and 13-10. No doubt there are other places such as these that might be listed in sections dealing with duties of the various courts of the church.

### B. *The Rules of Assembly Operation (RAO)*

Chapter XVI in the “Rules for Assembly Operation” deals with the “review of presbytery records.” There is considerable material here that defines the minimum acceptable content of the minutes of Presbytery, and the processes of review of those minutes by the General Assembly, as well as the response required of Presbytery to that review. It is essential that the clerk of Presbytery study this chapter in order to carry out his responsibilities effectively.

### C. *The Clerk’s Handbook*

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly provides a *Handbook* to the clerks of Presbyteries each year. This very helpful volume supplies a great deal of material, much of which is the practical material to enable the clerk to carry out the duties of his office. It may seem cumbersome at times and one might be tempted to ignore it, but the diligent pursuit of its pages can deliver one from embarrassment and failure.

## **D. Presbytery Standing Rules**

Of course the Standing Rules of one's own Presbytery almost certainly have some things to say about your duties. These will no doubt vary from Presbytery to Presbytery so we can do no more than to remind you to check them out.

## **E. Clerks' Conferences**

Another source of help are the conferences held annually in late November/early December by the Administrative Committee of General Assembly. These are intended to improve the functions of the church, by educating the clerks and thereby to encourage them to better functioning. Every Presbytery clerk ought to attend if at all possible, as their value serves not just for increasing knowledge but also for refreshment and renewed enthusiasm.

# **III. Presbytery Duties**

## **A. Keeping Minutes**

### **1. General Concerns**

This task is perhaps the one that most nearly describes the stated clerk's position. It is certainly the one with the highest visibility. Good minutes should describe what took place with as little ambiguity as can be achieved. For research purposes, they should also be structured in such a way as to make it as simple as possible to find whatever one might later need to know. These two concerns seem to me to be of first importance, second only to accuracy and faithfulness of recording and, in fact, they are a part of faithfulness.

For the required contents of the minutes, the clerk is directed to the whole of "RAO" 14. Here will be found the minimum acceptable matters and also some helpful ideas as to style.

For clarity, short simple sentences are usually best. The vocabulary ought to be as understandable to everyone (not just the initiates) as one can make it without requiring excessive elaboration or explanation. Considerateness suggests explanation whenever technical terminology is used, this out of regard for any who may have occasion to read the minutes but who do not possess the technical vocabulary. Why not just make it simpler from the start?

For ease in research, it is good (and I am sure that clerks who try this will find it very helpful) to give a short descriptive title to each major paragraph. The most effective form here is to print the title in capital letters. The value of such a practice will be quickly seen the first time one has to look for a specific action.

A clerk may also find it desirable to use a system of consecutive numbering of these paragraphs, such as that used in the Journal of the General Assembly Minutes. In this way it is possible to provide a wider index that not only marks the location of an individual action in a meeting but also provides a quick reference to the place of the meeting itself in the over all history of the Presbytery.

## 2. Style

It goes without saying that the clerk himself will largely determine the style of the minutes. This is not only true of the language patterns but also of the amount of material, beyond the essential minimums, which is included. Strictly speaking, the motions passed are about all that is absolutely necessary. But there is little interest in reading a repetition of the formula, “moved, seconded and passed.” A little extra to make the account “flow” or become more interesting to follow will certainly be appreciated by any who find it needful to read the minutes. It is also true that “bare” motions give little information of historical import.

Generally speaking, only motions actually passed need to be recorded. An obvious exception is any time a member of the body might request his vote to be recorded. However, it seems to me that lost motions, and more complete recording of the various motions such as amendments or substitutes that are made in coming to the final action do add to the ability to understand what actually took place in a meeting. The complete picture becomes more significant as time passes. Minutes are not just “data banks” but a form of history. Whether we like it or not, or think our area of life insignificant or not, we are part of history and when it falls to us to record it, we should do so in a worthy manner.

One may also include additional material to increase interest and raise the historic value of the minutes. If one chooses to do this, he should be careful not to distort the record or contribute to a prejudicial perception of the meeting. The recording of the minutes should be done as impartially as possible.

### **B. Maintaining Files**

The record, or “history” is not just the recitation of what went on. That surely is important but may not be fully understandable without long, complicated and perhaps clumsy incorporations of reports, correspondence etc, into the text. Thus files of such material are essential. The clerk ought to keep such files, and try to preserve them for the archives. They also enable him to keep track of his own fulfillment of duties. In this connection, it is advisable to preserve copies of his own responses to incoming correspondence. One must also keep in mind that there is always a possibility of the need for such material in the event of judicial process, either ecclesiastical or civil.

### **C. Correspondence**

The first image that comes to mind when the title clerk is given may well be “keeper of the minutes.” But the reputation of the clerk is possibly more dependent on his handling of correspondence than on how well he records the meetings. This will certainly be true in the company of one’s fellow clerks and also, although perhaps not as likely to be noticed or to “get back” to one, from among those outside the church with whom the clerk is called upon to exchange information. And it is exactly here that the reputation of the whole denomination is may be built up or torn down. So it is important to keep in mind that though there is little positive reinforcement in this area there is good reason for great diligence in doing a quality job.

Be quick to handle these duties. If you are required to respond directly, do so promptly and file the letter with your response. If the response is to come from Presbytery, make copies for all who should see them and file the original as soon as possible so nothing gets lost in the

“shuffle.” Of course it goes without saying that the distribution of the copies should be handled in ample time for action at the next meeting of Presbytery if at all possible.

The Presbyterian concern for orderly and businesslike process requires a good deal of correspondence. Timely handling of it is not only good business, it is just plain thoughtfulness. It is easy to see the need for the initial sending of information, but the one receiving this contact may forget that, often, he must respond before the transaction can be considered complete. When transferring credentials the transfer is really not effected until the receiving Presbytery acts and then notifies the dismissing body. When we do business by mail, which is preferable for the proper maintenance of records, it is important to keep in mind that acknowledgment should be a part of the procedure.

The telephone is a wonderful device, and so quick! But taping phone conversations requires additional machinery and tapes are space-consuming in storage. The emerging “fax” technology may be helpful, but again, considerable expense is involved and not everyone can afford it. We must remember that we do not know when proof will be needed either for our own well-being or in case of judicial process, so good correspondence practices are wise.

Emerging e-mail technology opens another area for handling correspondence. Here also the keeping of hard copies is advisable for historic and, possibly, judicial reasons. The speed and ease of this method should not deceive us into incomplete recording.

In the PCA, convenient forms are provided for handling the transfers of ministers and the communication of the information to the clerk of the General Assembly. The forms are structured so as to indicate the sequence to be followed in sending the forms and to provide copies for all needing them, the receiving body as well as the General Assembly. But it is nice and, really a helpful part of the process, if a little information about the history of the transferee is included. Thus a letter along with the form is a thoughtful addition as well as being a part of the man’s full credentials.

When dismissing or receiving a minister or church to or from another denomination, the *BCO* requires that the exchange be in order. So again, correspondence is obviously required. Inter-denominational correspondence, in the technical sense of the term, is not carried on at the Presbytery level. When “correspondence” is officially in place there is no question as to the appropriateness of the exchange of letters with the corresponding officer in the other body. But even where “correspondence” doesn’t exist, the necessary responsibilities demand that we determine the transfer to be in order. In such cases, no significance attends the writing and receiving of letters beyond the needed exchange of information.

Presbytery meetings almost always generate a good deal of business that requires the clerk to write letters. Promptness in attending to these duties may seem onerous but, as with all duties, it is almost always best. It is helpful to keep a list of such items as the meeting progresses and then check them off as they are completed. The order in which they are tended to will depend on their urgency. Notification of General Assembly in transfers, etc. has a requested and sometimes mandatory timeframe, which can be found in the clerk’s *Handbook*.

## **D. Direction of Presbytery**

Because the clerk is so much a part of the transaction of Presbytery business, it is obvious that he can be very helpful. The more efficiently he does his job, the smoother the whole function of Presbytery will be. Because this is so, it is a good idea to keep an effective and willing clerk in office. But always with the good comes the potential for the bad. The clerk must be sensitive to his heart motives and actions, to be as helpful as possible without using the office inappropriately. It is doubtful that a foolproof system for protection from such eventualities can be contrived so everyone needs to be alert. None is immune to the potential for evil, for “the heart is deceitful above all things...” (Jer. 17:9). Apart from the grace of God this would be an unbearable world.

The exact nature and limits of the way the clerk can be of help will largely be determined by the Presbytery’s structure and the gifts of the individual clerk. The clerk is the one most likely to be first contacted in the introduction of business, so he will be very important in the production of the docket for the meetings. It is also wise for him to refer matters to the committees best equipped to bring the business to the floor efficiently.

At the very least, the moderator should be involved in the production of the docket, if for no other reason than that he may be familiar with what is to take place. But even better, if you can get it, is the erection of a committee for the task. Representatives of each committee should be involved to make sure everything is considered that will affect the meeting.

It is very helpful in the functioning of the meetings if the clerk is knowledgeable in parliamentary procedure. However, it may be preferable to have a parliamentarian who is responsible for this duty. This will be indicated partly by how involved the stated clerk is in the actual recording of the minutes at the meeting itself. If he does a major part of this work, then it is clearly wise not to load him with tasks that might complicate the production of good minutes. If he has a competent recording clerk and is skillful in parliamentary procedure then the clerk is one obvious possibility for the job.

## **IV. GA Responsibilities**

### **A. Liaison with General Assembly**

All official communications in the church take place through the clerks of the various courts. This is also true of communications that go outside of the church. As mentioned earlier however, in the latter case, the nature of any given communication is regulated by the relationship between the PCA and the other church. So, as Presbytery relates to other ecclesiastical organizations, it will be through the clerk. Thus it is that other churches, Presbyteries or the General Assembly only truly “know” something when they receive notice officially signed by the clerk.

#### **1. Clerk’s *Handbook***

We previously pointed out the clerk’s *Handbook* as a source of help. It is in the required functions that the *Handbook* is most helpful, in fact, necessary. The functions of the church require that Presbytery provide information and manpower to the General Assembly. Thus, the clerk of Presbytery needs to be sure that he is aware of the specific areas and their timeframes so that Presbytery will not fall short on its responsibilities. Included here are elections of (and/or appointments to) nominees for permanent committees and agencies, representatives on Committees



of Commissioners, Review of Presbytery Records (RPR) Committee and (General Assembly level) Nominating Committee. The clerk's *Handbook* lays out the schedules for all of these requirements and gives other helpful material as well. Thus it is obvious that it must be one of the clerk's main tools in planning for the meetings of Presbytery and staying up on all his duties.

## 2. Changes

When ministers transfer, are ordained or demitted, when churches are formed or dissolved (missions also), when addresses change, the clerk of Presbytery must notify the office of the Stated Clerk of General Assembly. Helpful forms are provided by the GA Clerk's office and their use is requested. In recent years, with the prevalence of electronic mail, usage of the forms and the formality of mailing the signed original have been relaxed where possible. All forms from the GA Clerk's Office have been updated to specify the options available for submitting information.

## 3. Annual Reports

The rolls of Presbytery must be reported in full [promptly] at the first of every year. The Stated Clerk's Office sends copies of the current list to each clerk to make corrections and return. This is another clerk's requirement that has been relaxed to ease the clerk's workload and facilitate more prompt communication, thus more accurate records. Pastoral relationships and presbytery committee assignments are the primary pieces of information to be reviewed, and changes can be emailed, if convenient, to the Stated Clerk's Office at [records@pcanet.org](mailto:records@pcanet.org). Along with this information, it must be noted that the RPR Committee requires several other items in addition to the complete roll. These requirements will be found listed in chapter sixteen of "RAO."

## B. Minutes for Review

The primary way that General Assembly exercises oversight of the Presbyteries is by the review of minutes. The review takes place annually at the time of the General Assembly meeting. Only Official minutes can be considered for review and only "approved" minutes and minutes signed by the clerk are official. Copies are acceptable for review purposes, but they must be "photocopies" of the official minutes. There are many other details pertaining to the acceptable form and practice of submitting minutes for review. They are explained in "RAO" 14 and do not need further amplification here. Please give careful attention to that section of the Assembly's Rules of Operation and keep them handy for reference purposes. They will almost certainly be needed and help you avoid problems in the Review process.

## V. Afterward

In closing, let me add a word or two on how the clerk should view himself and his functions in relationship to the various courts of the church. Keep in mind that you serve Presbytery. The specifics of the job are Presbytery's responsibility, not yours. You are in the truest sense, a servant. This understanding is important in helping you to know how to relate to Presbytery and when consultation or immediate authorization may be required.

One major area where a right understanding of this attitude may alleviate or help one avoid unnecessary pain or frustration is in the matter of the review of Presbytery's minutes. It is clear that you will determine their "flavor" or style to a large extent, but the actions are not yours, they are entirely Presbytery's. It is Presbytery that approves the minutes, thereby taking full responsibility for them. Any later criticism, as in the review process, should therefore not

be taken personally. And the required response must be from Presbytery, not the clerk. You answer, not to the RPR Committee of GA, but to the Presbytery. If the cause of the criticism is your fault, plead your case in the lower court and let Presbytery handle its responsibilities, whatever the failures may be, before the higher court. It is true that this will take place through your offices, but always remember, you are only the agent of Presbytery.

**NOTE:** Rev. James A. Smith served for many years as the stated clerk of New Jersey Presbytery. He has also served as chairman of Presbytery Records Committee in the RPCES before the joining and receiving of the RPCES into the PCA. He has been a consistent and faithful servant to the church.

## PCA CLERKS ONLINE TOOLS

An **Email Group** has been set up for use by PCA Presbytery Clerks, Presbytery Recording Clerks, the PCA Stated Clerk's Office and other select individuals (past clerks, for instance).

The email group cannot be used by anyone other than members. To **subscribe**, send a blank email to:

[pcaclerks+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:pcaclerks+subscribe@groups.io)

If you are a member, **send messages** to the group by using the address:

[pcaclerks@groups.io](mailto:pcaclerks@groups.io)

If you would like to learn more about this email group, please visit:

<https://groups.io/g/pcaclerks>

***NOTE: The PCA Stated Clerk's Office sends reminders and important information through this vehicle. Please be sure to notify the PCA Stated Clerk's Office if you change your email address, and subscribe your new email address to the group.***

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The **Presbytery Portal** is another resource provided by the Stated Clerk's Office. We hope this provides an easy and time saving way to update records with the Stated Clerk's Office.

To access the Presbytery Portal:

<https://presbyteryportal.pcanet.org/>

If you need your login and/or password for the Presbytery Portal:

Email [hharrison@pcanet.org](mailto:hharrison@pcanet.org)

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## Forms and Clerks Handbook Available Online

You can download the Clerks Handbook, the Fall Nominations Packet, and many specific forms clerks need in daily tasks from the AC Website! Please visit:

<http://www.pcaac.org/presbyterydownloads/>

# CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF PRESBYTERIES

<u>Presbytery</u>	<u>Date Organized</u>	<u>Notations</u>
<del>Vanguard</del>	September 7, 1972	Merged into TN Valley, 4/8/77
1. Warrior	February 13, 1973	
2. Gulf Coast	April 10, 1973	
3. Westminster	April 10, 1973	
4. Central Georgia	May 30, 1973	
5. <del>North Georgia</del> Metro Atlanta	June 2, 1973 10/17/06	Divided to form Metro Atlanta (retains # 5), Northwest Georgia 10/17/06, and Georgia Foothills 1/1/07
6. South Florida 01/01/05	June 4, 1973	Divided by formation of Gulfstream,
7. Covenant	June 18, 1973	
8. Calvary	July 1, 1973	Divided by formation of Palmetto, 1/1/84; Further divided by formation of Fellowship, 7/1/94
9. Grace	July 17, 1973	
10. Mississippi Valley	July 19, 1973	
11. North Texas	July 31, 1973	Successor to Texas which was divided by formation of South Texas, 1/1/85
12. Evangel	August 5, 1973	
13. <del>Mid-Atlantic</del>	1973	Divided by formation of Philadelphia 9/19/80; Dissolved at Joining & Receiving to create Delmarva and James River 6/14/82
James River	October 30, 1973	Successor to Mid-Atlantic; Divided by formation of Blue Ridge, 9/14/02; Divided by formation of Tidewater 1/1/14
14. Tennessee Valley	January 15, 1974 7/9/94	Divided by formation of Nashville,
15. <del>Western Carolina</del> Highlands	February 16, 1974	Divided by formation of Central Carolina and Eastern Carolina, 10/28/78. Name changed Apr 2020
16. Pacific	February 26, 1974	Divided by formation of South Coast, 9/29/89, and Northern California, 10/27/89
17. New River	June 22, 1974	Divided by formation of Blue Ridge, 9/14/02
18. <del>Louisiana</del>	February 7, 1975	Divided by formation of Southeast Louisiana, 12/31/92; Dissolved 6/21/12 by merging into Covenant, Mississippi Valley, North Texas, and SE Louisiana
19. Ascension	July 29, 1975	Divided by formation of Pittsburgh, 1/1/93; Divided by redrawing of New York State, 7/1/02
20. Central Florida	October 15, 1977	
21. Central Carolina	October 28, 1978	Formed by division of Western Carolina
22. Eastern Carolina	October 28, 1978	Formed by division of Western Carolina
23. <del>Southwest</del>	July 18, 1980	Formed from Pacific Presbytery; Divided to form two presbyteries – Arizona retains #23
Arizona	January 1, 2018	Formed from Southwest - retains #23

<u>Presbytery</u>	<u>Date Organized</u>	<u>Notations</u>
24. Philadelphia	September 19, 1980	Formed from Mid-Atlantic
25. Siouxlands	June 15, 1981	
26. <del>Delmarva</del>	June 14, 1982	Created from Mid-Atlantic at Joining & Receiving (along with James River) Reorganized 1/1/90 as Heritage (successor) and Potomac
Heritage	January 1, 1990	Successor to Delmarva; retains # 26
27. Eastern Canada	June 14, 1982	
28. Great Lakes	June 14, 1982	Added by Joining & Receiving
29. Illiana	June 14, 1982	Added by Joining & Receiving
30. New Jersey	June 14, 1982	Added by Joining & Receiving
31. <del>Northeast</del>	June 14, 1982	Added by Joining & Receiving
Northern New England	September 15, 2000	Dissolved 9/15/2000 to form 3 new presbyteries – Northern New England retains #31
32. <del>Oklahoma</del>	June 14, 1982	Added by Joining & Receiving
<del>Mid-America</del>	April 13, 1985	Oklahoma became Mid-America
33. Pacific Northwest	June 14, 1982	Dissolved - merged into North Texas
		Added by Joining & Receiving
		Divided 1/1/06 to form Western Canada
34. Missouri	June 14, 1982	Added by Joining & Receiving as St. Louis Presbytery; renamed Missouri 1984
35. Northern Illinois	June 17, 1982	Divided to form Chicago Metro, Wisconsin 7/1/2005
36. Korean Eastern	June 17, 1982	
37. Korean Southwest	June 17, 1983	
38. Palmetto	January 1, 1984	Divided by redrawing of Fellowship, 07/01/04; Divided to form Low Country, Pee Dee, and Palmetto 1/1/2016
39. South Texas	January 1, 1985	Formed by dividing Texas Presbytery
40. Southeast Alabama	January 1, 1985	
41. Korean Central	June 25, 1986	
42. Korean Southeastern	June 25, 1986	
43. Susquehanna Valley	January 1, 1987	
44. Korean Southern	June 8, 1988	
45. Heartland	January 1, 1989	Formed from Korean Southwest
		Divided by creation of Iowa, 1/1/02;
		Divided by creation of Platte Valley, 11/1/07
46. South Coast	September 29, 1989	Formed from Pacific
47. Northern California	October 27, 1989	Formed from Pacific
48. Potomac	January 1, 1990	Divided by redrawing Chesapeake, 1/1/02; Divided by creation of Blue Ridge, 9/14/02
49. Southwest Florida	July 1, 1990	Divided by formation of Suncoast Florida, 07/01/04
50. Rocky Mountain	September 1, 1991	Formed from Southwest Presbytery
51. Korean Capital	October 5, 1992	
52. Korean Northwest	October 13, 1992	
53. Southern Louisiana	December 31, 1992	Formed from Louisiana; name changed from SE Louisiana, 2014
54. Pittsburgh	January 1, 1993	Formed from Ascension

<u>Presbytery</u>	<u>Date Organized</u>	<u>Notations</u>
55. Fellowship	July 1, 1994	Divided by redrawing of Palmetto, 07/01/04
56. Nashville	July 9, 1994	Formed from Tennessee Valley
57. Metropolitan New York	July 16, 1997	Formed from Northeast and New Jersey presbyteries
58. North Florida	October 17, 1998	
59. New York State	September 15, 2000	Formed from Northeast
60. Southern New England	September 15, 2000	Formed from Northeast
61. Piedmont Triad	July 1, 2001	Formed from Central Carolina
62. Ohio Valley	July 1, 2001	Formed from Great Lakes
63. Chesapeake	January 1, 2002	Formed from Potomac
64. Iowa	January 1, 2002	Formed by dividing Heartland
65. Blue Ridge	September 14, 2002	Formed from James River & Potomac
66. Houston Metro	January 1, 2004	Formed from South Texas
67. Savannah River	January 1, 2004	Formed from Central Georgia
68. Suncoast Florida	July 1, 2004	Formed from Southwest Florida
69. Gulfstream	January 1, 2005	Formed from Southern Florida
70. Chicago Metro	July 1, 2005	Formed from Northern Illinois
71. Wisconsin	July 1, 2005	Formed from Northern Illinois
72. <del>Western</del> Canada West	January 1, 2006	Formed from Pacific Northwest (name changed in 2018)
73. Eastern Pennsylvania	January 1, 2006	Formed from Philadelphia
74. Philadelphia Metro West	January 1, 2006	Formed from Philadelphia
75. Northwest Georgia	October 17, 2006	Formed from North Georgia
76. Georgia Foothills	January 1, 2007	Formed from North Georgia
77. Platte Valley	November 1, 2007	Formed from Heartland
78. Providence	January 1, 2009	Formed from Evangel
79. Ohio	January 1, 2010	Formed from Great Lakes, Ascension
80. Central Indiana	July 1, 2010	Formed from Ohio Valley
81. Catawba Valley	July 1, 2011	Formed from Central Carolina & Western Carolina
82. Korean Northeastern	February 7, 2012	Formed from Korean Eastern
83. Tidewater	January 1, 2014	Formed by division of James River
84. Korean SW Orange County	June 20, 2014	Formed by division of Korean Southwest
85. PeeDee	January 1, 2015	Formed from Palmetto
86. Lowcountry	January 1, 2015	Formed from Palmetto
87. Columbus Metro	August 1, 2016	Formed from Ohio
88. Hills and Plains	July 1, 2017	Formed out of North Texas and Covenant
89. Rio Grande	January 1, 2018	Formed by division of Southwest; and one county added from North Texas
90. West Hudson	January 1, 2019	Formed out of Metropolitan New York and New Jersey

NOTE: As of January 1, 2021, there were 88 presbyteries. Mid-America (#32) was dissolved in 1982. Louisiana (#18) was dissolved in 2012.

The boundaries of these presbyteries are defined on p. 009 – Presbytery Boundary Descriptions.

## PRESBYTERY BOUNDARIES

Updates to these boundaries should be sent to the Stated Clerk's Office at [ac@pcanet.org](mailto:ac@pcanet.org). For the most up to date listing, please visit <https://www.pcaac.org/resources/presbyteries/>.

*Note: The following Presbytery boundary descriptions have been gathered from Minutes of the General Assembly as the Assembly has approved them. The number after the name of the presbytery represents the chronological sequence in which that presbytery was organized by General Assembly. There is no longer a presbytery numbered 32, as Mid-America was dissolved, and there is no longer a presbytery numbered 18, as Louisiana was dissolved.*

### **Arizona (23)**

The entire state of Arizona.

### **Ascension Presbytery (19)**

All of Pennsylvania north and west of and including the counties of McLean, Elk, Clearfield, Jefferson, Armstrong, Butler, and Beaver.

### **Blue Ridge Presbytery (65)**

All churches and missions in Virginia, bounded on the north and east and including the counties (and contained independent cities) of Frederick, Clarke, Warren, Rappanock, Culpeper, Orange, Louisa, Fluvanna, Buckingham, Prince Edward, Lunenburg, and Mecklenburg; and bounded on the west by and including the counties of Giles, Pulaski, and Carroll (east of I-77).

### **Calvary Presbytery (8)**

All of South Carolina west of and including the counties of Edgefield, Saluda, Newberry, Laurens, and Cherokee, excluding that part of Cherokee county south of I-85 and east of the Broad River and that section south and east of State Routes 211 and 105.

### **Canada West Presbytery (72)**

All of the area within the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia; the Northwest Territories; and the Yukon Territory.

### **Catawba Valley Presbytery (81)**

The following counties of North Carolina: Alexander, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg north of Interstate 85, excluding that portion within I-485 west of I-77, and Rowan.

### **Central Carolina Presbytery (21)**

The following counties of North Carolina: Anson, Cumberland, Hoke, Lee, Mecklenburg south of Interstate 85, excluding that portion within I-485 west of I-77, Montgomery, Moore, Richmond, Robeson, Scotland, Stanly, and Union.

### **Central Florida Presbytery (20)**

The following counties of Florida: Marion, Levy, Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, Sumter, Lake, Volusia, Seminole, Orange, Osceola, and Brevard.

### **Central Georgia Presbytery (4)**

All of Georgia south of and including Harris, Talbot, Upson, Lamar, Butts, Jasper, Morgan, Greene, and Hancock counties; and west of the following counties: Washington, Johnson, Laurens, Wheeler, Telfair, Coffee, Atkinson, Clinch and Echols.

### **Central Indiana Presbytery (80)**

The following Indiana counties: south of and including Newton, Benton, White, Cass, Miami, Grant, Blackford, and Jay; north and east of and including Vermillion, Parke, Putnam, Morgan, Monroe, Lawrence, Orange, Crawford, and Perry; excluding Dearborn, Ohio, Switzerland, Jefferson, Scott, Clark, Floyd, Washington, and Harrison.

### **Chesapeake Presbytery (63)**

In Maryland, the city of Baltimore and the counties of Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Anne Arundel, and Howard, excluding that area of Howard County west of US Route 29, south of MD Route 216, and east of MD Route 108; and Kent Island in Queen Anne's County.

**Chicago Metro Presbytery (70)**

Includes the counties of Cook, Dupage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will in the state of Illinois; Lake County in Indiana.

**Columbus Metro Presbytery (87)**

All mission works and churches of the greater Columbus Metro region located in the counties of Franklin, Madison, Union, Delaware, Licking, Fairfield, and Pickaway.

**Covenant Presbytery (7)**

All the counties of Arkansas except the counties of Benton, Carroll, Washington, Madison, and Boone; all of Tennessee west of the Tennessee River (between Pickwick Lake and Kentucky Lake); and all of Mississippi north of and including the counties of Washington, Sunflower, Leflore, Choctaw, Oktibbeha, Lowndes, and Carroll County north of MS Hwy 430.

**Eastern Canada Presbytery (27)**

The whole area of the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.

**Eastern Carolina Presbytery (22)**

All of North Carolina east of and including the following counties: Person, Orange, Chatham, Harnett, Johnston, Sampson, Bladen, and Columbus.

**Eastern Pennsylvania Presbytery (73)**

The counties of Susquehanna, Wayne, Pike, Monroe, Wyoming, Luzerne, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton, Bucks, and Montgomery (north of Germantown Pike and east of I-476, excluding Cheltenham and Abington Townships).

**Evangel Presbytery (12)**

The Alabama counties of Lamar, Fayette, Walker, Jefferson, Shelby, Talladega, Clay, Randolph, Cleburne, Calhoun, Etowah, St. Clair, Blount, and Coosa.

**Fellowship Presbytery (55)**

South Carolina counties of Chester, York, Union, Lancaster and that part of Cherokee County south of I-85, and east of the Broad River and that section south and east of State Route 211 and 105.

**Georgia Foothills Presbytery (76)**

The Georgia counties of Hall, Barrow, Jackson, Clarke, Oconee, Habersham, and Union counties; also the counties of Oglethorpe, Elbert, Madison, Hart, Franklin, Banks, White, Stephens, Rabun, and Towns; and Gwinnett county north of the defined boundaries, from east to west, of Highway 316, then Sugarloaf Parkway to Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, then an imaginary line westward from the intersection of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Sugarloaf Parkway to the Chattahoochee River.

**Grace Presbytery (9)**

All of Mississippi south of and including the following counties: Claiborne, Copiah, Simpson, Smith, Jasper, and Clarke.

**Great Lakes Presbytery (28)**

All of the state of Michigan; Indiana counties north and east of and including the counties of Porter, Jasper, Pulaski, Fulton, Wabash, Huntington, Wells, and Adams.

**Gulf Coast Presbytery (2)**

Mobile, Baldwin, and Escambia (west of SR 113 and CR 17) counties of Alabama; all of Florida west of and including the counties of Madison and Taylor.

**Gulfstream Presbytery (69)**

The Florida counties of Palm Beach, Martin, Okeechobee, Indian River, and St. Lucie.

**Heartland Presbytery (45)**

All of Kansas, with the northwest Missouri counties of: Atchinson, Nodaway, Worth, Harrison, Gentry, Holt, Andrew, DeKalb, Daviess, Buchanan, Clinton, Caldwell, Platte, Clay, Ray, Jackson, Lafayette, Cass, and Johnson.



**Heritage Presbytery (26)**

The entire State of Delaware; In Maryland, all of Cecil County together with all that part of the State of Maryland on the Delmarva peninsula including Kent, Caroline, Queen Anne's, Talbot, Dorchester, Wicomico, Somerset, and Worcester counties (but excluding Kent Island); In Chester County Pennsylvania the following townships: New Garden, Elk, New London, London Grove (north of Route 41), London Britain, Birmingham, Pennsbury, East Marlborough, West Marlborough, Kennett, and Franklin, including the towns/boroughs contained therein, e.g., West Grove, Avondale, and Kennett Square.

**Highlands Presbytery (formerly Western Carolina) (15)**

All of North Carolina west of and including counties of Watauga, Caldwell, Burke, and Rutherford; and Cocke County, Tennessee.

**Hills and Plains**

All counties in the state of Oklahoma; in Arkansas the counties of Benton, Carroll, Washington, Madison, and Boone; in Missouri the counties of Jasper, McDonald, Newton, Dade, Polk, Dallas, Laclede, Texas, Wright, Webster, Greene, Lawrence, Christian, Douglas, Howell, Ozark, Taney, Stone, and Barry.

**Houston Metro Presbytery (66)**

All of the area south of and including the following Texas counties: Leon, Houston, Angelina, Nacogdoches, San Augustine and Sabine and the area east of and including the following Texas counties: Leon, Madison, Walker, Montgomery, Waller, Austin, Colorado, Wharton, and Matagorda.

**Illiana Presbytery (29)**

All of Illinois south of and including the counties of Pike, Morgan, Christian, Shelby, Moultrie, Douglas, and Edgar; all of Indiana south and west of and including the counties of Vigo, Clay, Owen, Greene, Martin, Dubois, and Spencer; and the following counties in Kentucky: Hancock, Daviess, Henderson, and Union.

**Iowa Presbytery (64)**

All of the state of Iowa except Pottawattamie County.

**James River Presbytery (13)**

The mid-eastern counties and cities of the Commonwealth of Virginia, including the counties of Stafford, Spotsylvania, King George, Caroline, Essex, Westmoreland, Richmond, Middlesex, Northumberland, Lancaster, King William, King and Queen, Hanover, Henrico, Charles City, New Kent, Chesterfield, Goochland, Powhatan, Amelia, Dinwiddie, Prince George, Nottoway, Sussex, Brunswick, and Greensville; and the independent cities of Richmond, Hopewell, Petersburg, Colonial Heights, and Fredericksburg.

**Korean Capital Presbytery (51)**

All of Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia, including Washington, D. C.

**Korean Central Presbytery (41)**

All of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Kentucky, North Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota.

**Korean Eastern Presbytery (36)**

All of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

**Korean Northeastern Presbytery (82)**

All of New York and the New England states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

**Korean Northwest Presbytery (52)**

All of the California counties north of and including San Louis Obispo, Kings, Tulare, Fresno, and Mono.

**Korean Southeastern Presbytery (42)**

All of North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

**Korean Southern Presbytery (44)**

All of Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas.

**Korean Southwest Presbytery (37)**

All of the California counties south of and including Inyo, Kern, and Santa Barbara; Los Angeles County and adjacent counties (excluding counties covered by Korean Northwest Presbytery). Also the states of Colorado and Nevada.

**Korean Southwest Orange County (O.C.) Presbytery (84)**

The California counties of Orange, San Diego, Riverside, and Imperial; and the state of Arizona.

**Lowcountry Presbytery (86)**

The South Carolina counties of Charleston, Berkeley, Dorchester, Beaufort, Jasper, Hampton, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Colleton, Calhoun, and Orangeburg.

**Metro Atlanta Presbytery (5)**

The Georgia counties of DeKalb, Fulton, Clayton, Cobb (East of I-75), Dawson, Lumpkin, Coweta, Heard, Spalding, Troup, Merriweather, Pike, Fayette, Forsyth, Rockdale, Newton, Henry, and Walton; and Gwinnett county south of the defined boundaries, from east to west, of Highway 316, then Sugarloaf Parkway to Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, then an imaginary line westward from the intersection of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Sugarloaf Parkway to the Chattahoochee River.

**Metropolitan New York Presbytery (57)**

The counties of New York State in the metropolitan area including Rockland, Westchester, Staten Island, and Long Island; all of New Jersey north of and including Middlesex and Mercer counties; and the Connecticut panhandle county of Fairfield west of and excluding Norwalk and New Canaan, CT.

**Mississippi Valley Presbytery (10)**

The following counties of Mississippi: Issaquena, Sharkey, Humphreys, Holmes, Montgomery, Attalla, Winston, Noxubee, Yazoo, Madison, Leake, Neshoba, Kemper, Warren, Hinds, Rankin, Scott, Newton, Lauderdale, and Carroll County south of MS Hwy 430. In northeast Louisiana the following parishes: Union, Morehouse, West Carroll, East Carroll, Lincoln, Ouachita, Richland, Madison, Jackson, Winn, Caldwell, Franklin, Tensas, Grant, La Salle, Catahoula, and Concordia.

**Missouri Presbytery (34)**

All of Missouri excluding the northwest counties of: Atchinson, Nodaway, Worth, Harrison, Daviess, Gentry, Andrew, Holt, DeKalb, Buchanan, Clinton, Caldwell, Ray, Clay, Platte, Jackson, Lafayette, Johnson, Cass; and further excluding the Missouri counties of Jasper, McDonald, and Newton.; and further excluding the Missouri counties of Dade, Polk, Dallas, Laclede, Texas, Wright, Webster, Greene, Lawrence, Christian, Douglas, Howell, Ozark, Taney, Stone, Barry.

**Nashville Presbytery (56)**

All of Kentucky south and west of and including the counties of Crittenden, Webster, McLean, Ohio, Grayson, Hart, Green, Adair, Russell and Wayne; all of Tennessee east of the Tennessee River (between Pickwick Lake and Kentucky Lake) to the eastern borders of the counties of Clay, Overton, Putnam, White, Van Buren, Grundy, and Franklin.

**New Jersey Presbytery (30)**

All of New Jersey, south of and including Burlington and Monmouth counties.

**New River Presbytery (17)**

All of West Virginia except for the counties of Morgan, Berkeley, and Jefferson.

**New York State Presbytery (59)**

All of New York State except those churches and counties belonging to Metropolitan New York Presbytery.

**North Florida Presbytery (58)**

The following counties of Florida: Hamilton, Suwannee, Lafayette, Dixie, Columbia, Baker, Union, Alachua, Gilchrist, Nassau, Duval, Bradford, Clay, Putnam, St. Johns, and Flagler; and northeast Marion County to include the town of McIntosh.

**North Texas Presbytery (11)**

The area of Texas north of and including the counties of Brewster, Terrell, Crockett, Schleicher, Menard, McCulloch, San Saba, Lampasas, Bell, Falls, Limestone, Freestone, Anderson, Cherokee, Rusk, and Shelby, but excluding the counties of El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, and Presidio; the northwest Louisiana parishes of Caddo, Bossier, Webster, Claiborne, De Soto, Red River, Bienville, Sabine, and Natchitoches

**Northern California Presbytery (47)**

All of the California counties north of and including the counties of San Luis Obispo, Kings, Tulare, Fresno, and Mono; the Nevada counties of Douglas, Lyon, Carson City, and Storey; the state of Hawaii; the state of Utah.

**Northern Illinois Presbytery (35)**

The state of Illinois north of and including the counties of Adams, Brown, Cass, Sangamon, Macon, Piatt, Champaign, and Vermilion, but not including the counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will.

**Northern New England Presbytery (31)**

All of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

**Northwest Georgia Presbytery (75)**

Bounded roughly by the I-75 and I-575 interstate corridor on the east, the Alabama state line on the west, I-20 on the south, and Tennessee Valley Presbytery on the north; includes the Georgia counties of Bartow, Carroll, Chattooga, Cherokee, Cobb, Douglas, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Paulding, Haralson, and Polk.

**Ohio Presbytery (79)**

All of Ohio north and east of and including the counties of Mercer, Shelby, Logan, Hardin, Marion, Morrow, Knox, Coshocton, Muskingum, Perry, Morgan, Hocking, Vinton, Athens, Meigs, Washington, Noble, Guernsey, Tuscarawas, Stark, Mahoning, Trumbull and Ashtabula, but not including the counties of Columbiana, Carroll, Harrison, Belmont, Monroe, and Jefferson.

**Ohio Valley Presbytery (62)**

The counties of Ohio south and west of but not including Mercer, Shelby, Logan, Union, Madison, Pickaway, Hocking, Vinton, and Meigs; all of Kentucky north and east of and including the counties of Breckinridge, Hardin, Larue, Taylor, Casey, Pulaski, and McCreary; and the Indiana counties of Dearborn, Ohio, Switzerland, Jefferson, Scott, Clark, Floyd, Washington, and Harrison.

**Pacific Presbytery (16)**

The California counties of Inyo, Kern, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino; and Clark county, Nevada.

**Pacific Northwest Presbytery (33)**

The states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho in their entirety.

**Palmetto Presbytery (38)**

All of South Carolina south and east of and including the counties of Aiken, Lexington, Richland, Fairfield, Kershaw, and Chesterfield.

**Pee Dee Presbytery (85)**

The South Carolina counties of Chesterfield, Marlboro, Lee, Sumter, Darlington, Florence, Dillon, Marion, Clarendon, Williamsburg, Georgetown, and Horry.

**Philadelphia Presbytery (24)**

Eastern Pennsylvania east of and including the counties of Susquehanna, Wyoming, Luzerne, Carbon, Lehigh, Montgomery, and Chester County west of Route 41.

**Philadelphia Metro West Presbytery (74)**

All of Berks County; all of Delaware County; Chester County northeast of a line going south on Route 41, Route 796, and Route 896, excluding Birmingham Township, Pennsbury Township, East Marlborough Township, West Marlborough Township, New Garden Township, London Grove Township (north of Route 41), Kennett Township, New London Township, Franklin Township, London Britain Township, and Kennett Square Borough; and all of Montgomery County west of I-476 plus that portion that is east of I-476 but south of Germantown Pike.

**Piedmont Triad Presbytery (61)**

The following counties of North Carolina: Ashe, Alleghany, Surry, Yadkin, Davie, Davidson, Stokes, Forsyth, Rockingham, Guilford, Randolph, Caswell, Alamance, and Wilkes.

**Pittsburgh Presbytery (54)**

All of Ohio east and south of and including the counties of Columbiana, Carroll, and Monroe; Garrett and Allegany counties in Maryland; and western Pennsylvania south and west of and including the counties of Washington, Alleghany, Westmoreland, Indiana, Cambria, Blair, and Bedford.

**Platte Valley Presbytery (77)**

The state of Nebraska and Pottawattamie County, Iowa.

**Potomac Presbytery (48)**

The following Maryland counties, together with the cities contained in their borders: Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, Prince George's, Saint Mary's, Washington, and that portion of Howard County west of U.S. Highway 29, south of SR 216, and east of SR 108; the following Virginia counties, together with the cities contained in their borders: Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, and Prince William; Washington, D.C.; the following West Virginia counties, together with the cities contained in their borders: Berkley, Jefferson, and Morgan.

**Providence Presbytery (78)**

The Alabama counties of Lauderdale, Limestone, Madison, Jackson, Cherokee, Dekalb, Marshall, Morgan, Lawrence, Colbert, Franklin, Marion, Winston, and Cullman.

**Rio Grande Presbytery (89)**

The entire state of New Mexico; the Texas county of El Paso.

**Rocky Mountain Presbytery (50)**

The states of Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana.

**Savannah River Presbytery (67)**

All of Georgia south of and including the following counties: Taliaferro, Wilkes, and Lincoln; and east of Greene, Hancock, Washington, Johnson, Laurens, Wheeler, Telfair, Coffee, Atkinson, Clinch, and Echols.

**Siouxlands Presbytery (25)**

The States of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

**South Coast Presbytery (46)**

The California counties of San Diego, Imperial, Riverside, and Orange.

**South Florida Presbytery (6)**

The following Florida counties: Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Cayman Islands.

**South Texas Presbytery (39)**

The area south and including or bounded by the following Texas counties: Val Verde, Sutton, Kimble, Mason, Llano, Burnet, Williamson, Milam, Robertson, Brazos, Grimes, Washington, Fayette, Lavaca, Jackson, and Calhoun.

**Southeast Alabama Presbytery (40)**

The area south and east of and including the counties of Chambers, Tallapoosa, Chilton, Autauga, Lowndes, Butler, Monroe, and Escambia (east of SR 113 and CR 17).

**Southern Louisiana Presbytery (53)**

All of the Louisiana parishes south and east of and including Vernon, Rapides, Avoyelles, and Pointe Coupee.

**Southern New England Presbytery (60)**

All of Massachusetts and Rhode Island and that portion of Connecticut not included in Metro New York Presbytery.

**Southwest Florida Presbytery (49)**

The Florida counties of Pinellas, Hillsborough, Polk, Highlands, and Hardee.

**Suncoast Florida Presbytery (68)**

The Florida counties of Manatee, Sarasota, DeSoto, Charlotte, Glades, Hendry, Lee, and Collier.

**Susquehanna Valley Presbytery (43)**

The following counties of Pennsylvania: Potter, Tioga, Bradford, Cameron, Clinton, Lycoming, Sullivan, Centre, Union, Snyder, Northumberland, Montour, Columbia, Huntingdon, Mifflin, Juniata, Perry, Dauphin, Schuylkill, Lebanon, Fulton, Franklin, Cumberland, Adams, York, Lancaster, and all that part of Chester County west of a line going south on Route 41, Route 796, and Route 896, except the townships of Elk, New London, Franklin, and London Britain.

**Tennessee Valley Presbytery (14)**

All of Tennessee from the western borders of the counties of Pickett, Fentress, Cumberland, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, and Marion to the eastern borders of the counties of Claiborne, Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson, and Sevier; and five counties in Georgia: Dade, Walker, Whitfield, Catoosa, and Murray.

**Tidewater Presbytery (83)**

The southeastern counties and cities of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the northeastern counties of the State of North Carolina, including: (from Virginia) the counties of Surry, Southampton, James City, York, Gloucester, Mathews, Isle of Wight, Accomack, and Northampton; and the cities of Williamsburg, Suffolk, Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach, and Franklin; and (from North Carolina) the counties of Currituck, Camden, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Chowan, Gates, Hertford, Bertie and the area of Dare County east of Croatan Sound and North of Oregon Inlet.

**Warrior Presbytery (1)**

The following counties of Alabama: Pickens, Tuscaloosa, Greene, Hale, Bibb, Sumter, Perry, Choctaw, Marengo, Dallas, Wilcox, Washington, and Clarke.

**West Hudson (90)**

All of New Jersey north of and including Middlesex county; and Rockland county in the state of New York.

**Westminster Presbytery (3)**

All of Virginia west of and including counties of Buchanan, Tazewell, Bland, and that portion of Carroll county west of I-77; the following counties of Tennessee: Hancock, Hawkins, Greene, Washington, Sullivan, Carter, Unicoi, and Johnson.

**Wisconsin Presbytery (71)**

All counties within the state limits of Wisconsin.

## **GUIDELINES FOR DIVIDING PRESBYTERIES**

The following guidelines were updated by MNA and approved at the 41<sup>st</sup> General Assembly.

### **GUIDELINES FOR FORMING NEW PRESBYTERIES THROUGH THE DIVISION OR MULTIPLICATION OF EXISTING PRESBYTERIES**

Background and Direction Provided by *The Book of Order*:

*Book of Church Order* Chapter 14 presents as one of the duties of the General Assembly: “To erect new Presbyteries, and unite and divide those which were erected with their consent;” (14.6.e). Historically, the General Assembly has viewed “with their consent” as the key phrase, and has therefore granted maximum latitude to Presbyteries in this process. Thus the burden falls upon the Presbytery to evaluate her own circumstances and resources in coming to a careful decision to proceed with division.

*Book of Church Order* Chapter 13, *The Presbytery*, describes the composition and duties of the Presbytery. As Presbyteries grow in the number of congregations and membership they include, there may come a time at which division of the Presbytery may be helpful. Of particular note when considering the division of a Presbytery is the list of responsibilities detailed in *BCO* 13-9. On the one hand, Presbyteries should be small enough that these responsibilities are manageable and can be carried out meaningfully. On the other hand, Presbyteries must be sure that they have the resources necessary to fulfill these responsibilities.

The guidelines which follow are presented to assist the Presbytery in evaluating when it may be time to divide, and what factors to take into consideration when making that decision. These guidelines are drawn from experience and observation since the inception of the Presbyterian Church in America.

These guidelines are only guidelines. By the vote of one or (if necessary) more Presbyteries and approval by the General Assembly, Presbyteries may be formed which do not meet these guidelines. In such situations where the guidelines will not be met, Presbyteries are urged to consider carefully whether or not God’s work will be advanced through the formation of the new Presbyteries.

The current Korean language Presbyteries represent an overlay with the English language Presbyteries geographically. The Korean language Presbyteries are geographical Presbyteries, and they are encouraged to follow the same guidelines in division and formation of new Presbyteries.

#### **General Guidelines for Dividing Presbyteries:**

- Consideration of the impact of a Presbytery division on the functions of the Presbytery, especially in her ability to grow and multiply churches:
  - Presbytery boundaries should be such that her member churches have a common commitment to the region within their boundaries and a deep commitment to their shared responsibility to cover the region with the Gospel through evangelism and church planting.
  - A Presbytery should have regional cohesiveness. The Presbytery should have a geographical spread that is as reasonable as possible to facilitate planting churches, encouraging fellowship, participating together in shared ministry and conducting the necessary business of the Presbytery. The specifics of the geographical considerations vary greatly according to density of populations and the number of PCA churches in each population center.
  - Care should be taken to ensure that the resulting new Presbyteries will be strong enough to grow in a healthy way. Toward that end, the burden falls on what will become the stronger

Presbytery to ensure that the weaker will have sufficient resources before moving toward division. The division should proceed only if there is a majority vote in favor of the division in both of the new Presbyteries that will be formed by the division.

- Numeric guidelines:
  - A Presbytery should have a minimum of 10 churches and mission churches.
  - A Presbytery should have a total communicant membership of at least 1,000.
  - A Presbytery should have at least 3 churches each having a membership of at least 125 communicant members.
- If Presbytery boundaries partition metropolitan areas, they should:
  - Follow the Edge City concept, so that each new Presbytery formed has opportunities for church planting that are cohesive within her boundaries.
  - Understand that cooperation across Presbytery boundaries will be necessary in planting churches, since opportunities for planting by one congregation may cross into the bounds of the other Presbytery.
  - Keep the Presbyteries united in some form of (formal or informal) church planting network, so that the resources of both Presbyteries can be utilized for church planting.

### **Counting the Cost: Time, Talent, and Treasure.**

The resources of the Presbytery include the stewardship of the time, talent, and treasure of the current and potential future Presbyteries.

- Care should be taken to ensure that there will be a good distribution of time, talent, and treasure in the new resulting Presbyteries.
- Church planting momentum usually declines following a Presbytery division unless church planting efforts remain coordinated in a formal or informal church planting network that combines the resources of both of the original Presbyteries.
- All essential positions must be replicated in the new Presbytery. Therefore, the number of leadership positions doubles. The additional cost of time, talent and treasure should be counted and carefully considered.

### **Procedures for Division**

- Special care should be taken to ensure that the division of a Presbytery is not made in haste or without adequate consideration of the needs of all parties involved. At the earliest stages of discussion of possible division (including informal discussion), those initiating the discussion:
  - should take care to ensure that all churches and teaching elders (including missionaries and other out of bounds members) who will possibly be affected are fully informed of the discussion as early as possible;
  - should communicate with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, who in turn should communicate with the entire Presbytery;
- Should be encouraged to contact General Assembly Mission to North America and the General Assembly Stated Clerk very early in the process as well, for any assistance the Permanent Committees may be able to offer in making a smooth transition and in giving advice that may be helpful to the planning process; and
- Should target the first meeting of a Presbytery in the summer or fall of the year so that they may be able to fully participate in the nominating process of General Assembly without undue delay.

**COMITY AGREEMENT**  
**from the *PCA Digest*, 1973-1993**

COMITY AGREEMENT (GOLDEN RULE)

1985, P. 98, 13-44, III, 9. That we affirm the following courteous code of behavior to guide our church planting ministries in North America:

- A. We will be sensitive to the presence of existing churches and missions ministries of other NAPARC churches and will take great care in receiving members of these existing ministries.
- B. We will communicate with the equivalent or appropriate agency (denominational missions committee or board, Presbytery missions or church extension committee, or session) before initiating church planting activities in a neighborhood where NAPARC churches or missions ministries exist.
- C. We will provide information on at least an annual basis describing progress in our ministries and future plans.
- D. We will encourage our regional home missions leadership to develop good working relationships.

(Grounds: The above is the “Golden Rule” Comity Agreement of NAPARC as slightly amended.)

1987, p. 165, 15-80, III, 6. That the General Assembly accept the explanation made by NAPARC and adopt its “Golden Rule Comity Agreement.”

- a. NAPARC defined “enlisting” as “actively recruiting” and felt that the paragraph regarding communicating is sufficiently clear without further refinement or definition.
- b. The “Golden Rule Comity Agreement” as adopted by all the NAPARC churches but the PCA reads as follows:  
 “That we affirm the following courteous code of behavior to guide our church planting ministries in North America:
  - 1) We will be sensitive to the presence of existing churches and missions ministries of other NAPARC churches, and will refrain from enlisting members and take great care in receiving members of these existing ministries.
  - 2) We will communicate with the equivalent or appropriate agency (denominational missions committee or board, Presbytery missions or church extension committee, or session) before initiating church planting activities in a community where NAPARC churches or missions ministries exist.
  - 3) We will provide information on at least an annual basis describing progress in our ministries and future plans.
  - 4) We will encourage our regional home missions leadership to develop good working relationships.

1989, p. 152, 17-82, III, 10. That amendments to the *BCO* are unnecessary to enable Session and Presbyteries to be guided by the NAPARC AGREEMENT, and that the Assembly *communicate* the NAPARC AGREEMENT to Sessions and Presbyteries for their guidance.

*Note: The PCA Version has no geographical limitation.*



## AGREEMENT ON TRANSFER OF MEMBERS AND CONGREGATIONS

Recognizing that the churches of NAPARC have on occasion unintentionally received members or ordained officers who were under various states of discipline in another NAPARC church, thus creating tension between the churches, and at the same time recognizing the need for mutual freedom and openness on the part of the churches, we agree to respect the procedures of discipline and pastoral concern of the other denomination as follows:

1.     Regular Transfer of Membership  
           That in the regular transfer of membership between NAPARC churches, the session/consistory or presbytery/classis not receive a member until the appropriate document of transfer is in the hands of the receiving church.
  
2.     Transfer with Irregularities
  - a.     That upon request for transfer of membership by a person under discipline, the sending session/consistory or presbytery/classis inform the receiving body of the nature and extent of the disciplinary procedure before implementing the requested transfer, thus enabling informal consultation between the pastors and elders of both churches.
  - b.     That such a person not be received officially until the judicatory/assembly of the receiving church has taken into serious account the discipline of and the information supplied by the sending church.
  - c.     That a “fugitive from discipline” who no longer is a member of a church or who is no longer on the roll of a presbytery shall not be received until the former judicatory/assembly has been contacted to determine if proper restitution has been made and/or reconciliation has been attempted.
  
3.     Recourse and Appeal  
           When communication or action regarding the sending/receiving of a member or ordained officer/office bearer does not satisfy either the dismissing or receiving judicatory/assembly, communication may be submitted to the interchurch relations committees of the denominations involved with a view to mediation of the problem. If this proves unsatisfactory, the session/consistory or presbytery/classis may register its concern to the appropriate judicatory/assembly of the denomination.
  
4.     Congregational Transfer  
           That a congregation seeking to leave a NAPARC church to become affiliated with another NAPARC denomination be received only after it has complied with the requirements of the form of government of the church from which it is separating, and the receiving church shall be responsible to see that this is done.

*NOTE:* Adopted at the 16<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, 1988, *MI6GA, 16-25, III, p. 116*. The version adopted by the OPC omitted paragraph 2.c. requiring reconciliation and/or restitution.

## **INTERCHURCH RELATIONS**

In 2000 the IRC recommended to the Assembly that we only have two categories of ecclesiastical relations with other denominations. Some NAPARC denominations have three or four categories.

The PCA does not have fraternal relations with all NAPARC denominations because the Reformed Church in the United States does not want to have fraternal relations with us.

### **The PCA's Ecclesiastical Relations**

Since the 28th General Assembly in 2000 we have had two types of ecclesiastical relationships with other denominations.

#### **Fraternal Relations**

The General Assembly may maintain a fraternal relationship with other Presbyterian/ Reformed denominations that are voting members of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council and with other such Churches with whom the General Assembly wishes to establish fraternal relations unilaterally. This would involve the exchange of fraternal delegates, exchange of General Assembly or General Synod minutes, communications on matters of mutual concern, and other matters that may arise from time to time.

#### **The PCA presently has Fraternal Relations with:**

- The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)
- The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
- The Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America
- Korean American Presbyterian Church
- Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ)
- The United Reformed Churches in North America
- National Presbyterian Church of Mexico
- Presbyterian Church of Brazil

#### **Corresponding Relations**

The General Assembly may maintain corresponding relations with other evangelical Churches in North America and in other continents for exchanging greetings and letters of encouragement. This may include the exchange of official observers at the broadest assemblies, and communications on issues of common concern.

#### **The PCA presently has Corresponding Relations with:**

- Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC),
- Reformed Churches of South Africa,
- Presbyterian Church of Japan,
- Reformed Churches of the Netherlands,
- The Free Church of Scotland

We have had what amounts to “corresponding relations” with the Reformed Episcopal Church from early in the 1970s. The REC commended the PCA at its founding. Since the REC was one of six denominations founding the Anglican Church in North America in 2009, sometimes the ACNA ecumenical representative to our Assembly has been an REC minister or their presiding bishop and sometimes he has been from ACNA at large. The Church of England and the Reformed Church of Hungary originated as Reformed Churches, but maintained episcopal polity rather than Presbyterian polity. Part of the delegation to the Synod of Dort included an Anglican bishop, George Carleton on Llandaff, and two future bishops, Joseph Hall and John Davenant.

There are two NAPARC agreements among NAPARC member denominations that are appendices to our Book of Church Order. Both NAPARC agreements were amended and approved by our General Assembly. Neither NAPARC agreement has constitutional status, however. One of those agreements on the transfer of members does include a “fugitive from discipline” section.

In the Reformed tradition we often speak of three marks of the Church, 1) Faithful preaching to the Word, 2) administration of the sacraments, and 3) practice of discipline. Before a denomination is recommended to the Assembly for fraternal relations, the IRC investigates them to insure that they have all three marks of the Church, though the PCA does not intervene in the internal discipline of other denominations.

“Corresponding relations” could cover denominations with whom we share the universal creeds of the Church (Apostles’ Creed and Nicene Creed), evangelicalism in general, or the Reformed Faith in particular, and share common interests (ex. sanctity of life, biblical marriage between one man and one woman, religious liberty, etc.). For example, we have corresponding relations with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. We have had Dr. Al Mohler, President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, speak to our General Assembly. (Four of the five founding professors of Southern studied at the Old Princeton Seminary in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century). Theoretically, we could have corresponding relations with the Southern Baptist Convention, if the IRC recommended it and the General Assembly approved it.

Since the General Assembly in 2000, our two categories of ecclesiastical relations, have simplified matters of ecclesiastical relations and given us flexibility.

### **PCA Membership in Other Organizations**

The PCA is a member of:

NAPARC – the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council  
WRF - The World Reformed Fellowship

### **NAPARC Denominations**

NAPARC, or North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council, was formed shortly after the formation of the PCA. Its purpose is four-fold:

1. Facilitate discussion and consultation between member bodies on those issues and problems that divide them as well as on those that they face in common and by the sharing of insights "communicate advantages to one another" (Institutes IV, 2, 1).
2. Promote the appointment of joint committees to study matters of common interest and concern.
3. Exercise mutual concern in the perpetuation, retention, and propagation of the Reformed faith.
4. Promote cooperation wherever possible and feasible on the local and denominational level in such areas as missions, relief efforts, Christian schools, and church education.

NAPARC meets annually in the fall and is attended by PCA representatives from the Interchurch Relations Committee. Contact information is provided below for matters concerning individual churches in NAPARC denominations wishing to affiliate with the PCA. For further assistance, visit NAPARC’s website, [www.naparc.org](http://www.naparc.org).

### **NAPARC Member Denominations**

**ARPC** – Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church- [www.arpchurch.org](http://www.arpchurch.org)

**CanRC** – Canadian and American Reformed Churches - [www.canrc.org](http://www.canrc.org)

**ERQ** – Eglise Reformee du Quebec (aka – The Reformed Church of Quebec (RCQ)) - [www.erq.qc.ca](http://www.erq.qc.ca)

**FRCNA** – Free Reformed Churches of North America - [www.frcna.org](http://www.frcna.org)

**HRC** – Heritage Reformed Congregations - [heritagereformed.com](http://heritagereformed.com)

**KAPC** – Korean-American Presbyterian Church - [www.kapc.org](http://www.kapc.org)

**KPCA** – Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin)

**OPC** – Orthodox Presbyterian Church – [www.opc.org](http://www.opc.org)

**PCA** – Presbyterian Church in America – [www.pcanet.org](http://www.pcanet.org)

**PresRC** – Presbyterian Reformed Church – [presbyterianreformed.org](http://presbyterianreformed.org)

**RCUS** – Reformed Church in the US – [www.rcus.org](http://www.rcus.org)

**RPCNA** – Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America - [reformedpresbyterian.org](http://reformedpresbyterian.org)

**URCNA** – United Reformed Churches in North America - [www.urna.org](http://www.urna.org)

## REGARDING AFFILIATION WITH THE PCA

When a church or pastor from another denomination contacts the PCA Stated Clerk's Office concerning affiliation with the PCA, they are directed to the presbytery clerk of the presbytery that oversees their region.

When contacted by a church, the Presbytery would follow the steps outlined in the letter below. When contacted by a pastor, refer to 045 Checklist for Reception from Another Denomination (*BCO* 13-6 & 21-4).

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Sample letter from Presbytery:

Thank you for your interest in the PCA. In responding to your question about affiliation with the PCA, let me direct you to *The Book of Church Order*, sections 13-8 and 24-5.

- 13-8.** The Presbytery, before receiving into its membership any church, shall designate a commission to meet with the church's ruling elders to make certain that the elders understand and can sincerely adopt the doctrines and polity of the Presbyterian Church in America as contained in its Constitution. In the presence of the commission, the ruling elders shall be required to answer affirmatively the questions required of officers at their ordination. (see *BCO* 24-5 for questions)
- 24-5.** The day having arrived, and the Session being convened in the presence of the congregation, a sermon shall be preached after which the presiding minister shall state in a concise manner the warrant and nature of the office of ruling elder, or deacon, together with the character proper to be sustained and the duties to be fulfilled. Having done this, he shall propose to the candidate, in the presence of the church, the following questions, namely:
1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
  2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the *Confession of Faith* and the *Catechisms* of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will, on your initiative, make known to your Session the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?
  3. Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in America, in conformity with the general principles of biblical polity?
  4. Do you accept the office of ruling elder (or deacon, as the case may be) in this church, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life, and to set a worthy example before the Church of which God has made you an officer?
  5. Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?
  6. Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the Church?

The ruling elder or deacon elect having answered in the affirmative, the minister shall address to the members of the church the following question:

Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this brother as a ruling elder (or deacon), and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord to which his office, according to the Word of God and the Constitution of this Church, entitles him?

The members of the church having answered this question in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the candidate shall then be set apart, with prayer by the minister or any other Session member and the laying on of the hands of the Session, to the office of ruling elder (or deacon). Prayer being ended, the members of the Session (and the deacons, if the case be that of a deacon) shall take the newly ordained officer by the hand, saying in words to this effect:

We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this office with us.

The minister shall then say:

I now pronounce and declare that \_\_\_\_\_ has been regularly elected, ordained and installed a ruling elder (or deacon) in this church, agreeable to the Word of God, and according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America; and that as such he is entitled to all encouragement, honor and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

After which the minister or any other member of the Session shall give to the ruling elder (or deacon) and to the church an exhortation suited to the occasion.

Your church would be in the area under our Presbytery. I will be able to guide you through the process for reception into the Presbyterian Church in America if your church is interested.

Once again, thank you for your interest in the PCA.

## RECORDS MANAGEMENT GUIDE

This manual provides guidance for storing and destroying records retained by groups within the church. Following these guidelines will make record keeping and document retention decisions easier. As records are developed, make decisions about retention and storage when the documents are no longer needed on a regular basis. For example, financial records need to be kept for a fairly long period of time. Attached to this guide is a retention schedule for common office records. This schedule can provide assistance as agencies decide how long to maintain a record.

First, determine what records exist and how frequently they will be used. This information can be entered on the PCA Record Management Form (see following page). The following comments may help clarify various parts of the form.

**Type of Record:** One form should be created for each record type or sub-type

Examples of types of records could include:

- Financial/Balance Sheet, Ledgers, Canceled Checks
- Administrative/Minutes, Reports, Correspondence
- Legal/Contracts, Property Titles
- Insurance/Copy of Policy, Claims
- Personnel/Pay Records

**Date(s)** - should be inclusive for all documents within a record set, e.g., 1998, or 1985–1988

**Location** – Record location if other than the local office file, i.e., filed in Box 7 in Room 135

**Physical Arrangement** - this section will be particularly important to the Historical Center

**Frequency of Use** - this section helps make retention decisions

Ensure that the denomination does not drown in a sea of old paper. Before disposition decisions are made, review the suggested retention schedule, or if necessary, seek legal assistance on document retention.

If documents cannot be destroyed after five years, and are used infrequently, they are candidates for shipment to the Historical Center. *Space within the Center is extremely limited.* The Center must know if the documents it receives from the agencies/offices are for permanent retention, should be reviewed for historical value after a specified period of time, or ultimately destroyed.

Developing an active on-going record management program in your office enables elimination of unnecessary and unwanted files and conservation of office file space.

The PCA Historical Center retains and maintains the historical records of the denomination. From a corporate standpoint, as opposed to a personal collection, the Center will permanently retain the follow items:

- Records designated for permanent storage by Agencies or required by the PCA Records Retention Plan.
- Policy statements by the Office of the Stated Clerk, Agencies and their sub-divisions, and all official committees.
- Minutes and Reports - all General Assembly, Agency, Committee and sub-committee minutes and official reports.
- Correspondence - official correspondence relating to policy, plans, programs or personnel.
- Financial Reports - annual financial reports and statements and audited reports. Periodic reports will be retained if they are not superseded by annual reports.
- Publications - a minimum of one copy of newsletters, prayer letters, magazines, journals, etc.
- Photographs and other audio-visual records of denominational personalities and activities.
- Records of Special Events - such as ground-breakings/dedications.
- Other items deemed by the Historical Center to have historical significance.

**PCA RECORDS MANAGEMENT FORM**

Agency _____ Date _____
Office: _____
Type of Record: _____
Location (if other than office files) _____
Organization: [circle one] _____ Alphabetical    Numerical    Date    Other

Frequency of Use:	1 <sup>st</sup> yr	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> yrs	4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> yrs	Over 5 years
weekly				
monthly				
yearly				

Disposition (in Agency/Office)
Retain in Agency/Office until _____ then destroy locally
Retain in Agency/Office until _____ then ship to Historical Center

Disposition (After shipment to historical Center)
Retain in Historical Center until _____ then destroy
Retain in Historical Center until _____ then Historical Center will review materials for historical value and destroy remaining documents.
Retain permanently in Historical Center.

One copy of this form is to be maintained with records
Disposition of records - approved by _____
Date: _____



## SUGGESTED RETENTION SCHEDULE

The Retention Schedule shown below was adopted from a nationwide survey of record retention schedules, and is provided as a guide to retention decisions. Each church, Presbytery, office or Agency should determine its actual retention periods. A blank space is provided after each retention period, so that each office can establish its own particular retention period, if it differs from the suggested time period. Individual state legal requirements may also call for longer retention periods than those shown. If documents are to be sent to the Historical Center for temporary or permanent storage, the Center will need to have a copy of the approved office retention schedule if changes have been made in the suggested Retention Schedule.

<u>ACCOUNTING</u>	<u>Years</u>	
Accounts, charged off.....	7	_____
Accounts, receivable .....	10	_____
Balance sheets .....	5	_____
Bank deposit records.....	6	_____
Bank statements .....	8	_____
Bills collectible.....	7	_____
Bill of sales, registered bonds.....	3	_____
Bonds, registered .....	p	_____
Bonds, cancelled .....	3	_____
Budget work sheets .....	3	_____
Building permits .....	20	_____
Cash books .....	25	_____
Cash disbursement records.....	10	_____
Cash receipts .....	10	_____
Cash sales slips .....	3	_____
Charge slips.....	10	_____
Check registers .....	10	_____
Checks .....	10	_____
Correspondence,		
accounting .....	5	_____
credit & collection.....	7	_____
Donation records .....	7	_____
Estimates .....	7	_____
Expense reports .....	5	_____
Financial statements, certified.....	p	_____
Financial statements, periodic .....	p	_____
Fixed capital records .....	p	_____
General cash book .....	25	_____
General journal .....	10	_____
Ledgers .....	p	_____
Notes, cancelled.....	10	_____
Payroll register.....	7	_____
Petty cash records .....	3	_____
Trial balance sheets .....	p	_____
Uncollectible accounts .....	7	_____
Working papers.....	2	_____
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE</u>		
Audit reports, internal.....	10	_____
Audit reports.....	p	_____
Correspondence,		
advertising .....	3	_____
executive .....	2	_____
general .....	3	_____
personal .....	6	_____
purchasing .....	5	_____
sales & service.....	3	_____
tax .....	20	_____
Organizational charts .....	p	_____
Records of procedures.....	p	_____

ADVERTISING

Activity reports.....	5	_____
Contracts.....	10	_____
Drawings & artwork .....	p	_____
Estimates .....	2	_____
House publications.....	p	_____
Marketing data & surveys .....	5	_____
Media schedules .....	5	_____
Samples, displays.....	p	_____
Tear sheets.....	3	_____

CORPORATE

Annual reports .....	p	_____
Authorization for expenditures .....	3	_____
Charters, constitution, bylaws & amendments .....	p	_____
Contract, employee.....	p	_____
Contract, vendor .....	10	_____
Easements.....	p	_____
Policy statements & directives .....	p	_____
Projects, ideas, notes.....	p	_____
Records of mergers, consolidations, dissolutions, reorganizations .....	p	_____
Research reports .....	20	_____
Speeches, publications .....	10	_____

INSURANCE & PERSONNEL

Accident reports .....	11	_____
Applications, terminations.....	3	_____
Appraisals.....	p	_____
Attendance records.....	6	_____
Claims, group life & health.....	4	_____
Claims, workmen's compensation .....	10	_____
Correspondence .....	6	_____
Disability & sick benefits records .....	8	_____
Earnings records.....	p	_____
Employee service records .....	p	_____
Employee contracts .....	7	_____
Expired policies:		
accident & fire .....	7	_____
hospital .....	6	_____
liability .....	7	_____
life.....	7	_____
property .....	8	_____
workmen's compensation .....	10	_____
Insurance records, group & employee .....	6	_____
Medical folders, employee.....	5	_____
Payroll records .....	p	_____
Pension plan .....	p	_____
Pension plan applications.....	p	_____
Pension plan claims .....	p	_____
Pension plan correspondence .....	p	_____
Salary and rate changes.....	10	_____
Time cards.....	5	_____
Training manuals.....	p	_____
Withholding, exemption certificates .....	8	_____
Workmen's compensation reports.....	10	_____

LEGAL

Affidavits .....	10	_____
Charters .....	p	_____
Claims & litigations .....	p	_____
Copyrights .....	p	_____

Incorporation records.....	p	_____
Licenses, federal, state, local .....	p	_____
Mortgages .....	5	_____
Permits to conduct business.....	p	_____
Trademarks .....	p	_____

PLANT & PROPERTY

Appraisals.....	p	_____
Blueprints .....	30	_____
Damage reports .....	7	_____
Deeds, titles.....	p	_____
Depreciation schedules.....	3	_____
Inventory records .....	16	_____
Leases.....	6	_____
Maintenance & repair, buildings.....	10	_____
Maintenance & repair, machinery.....	5	_____
Plans & specifications .....	p	_____
Purchase, lease records .....	1	_____
Work orders.....	5	_____

PURCHASING

Acknowledgments.....	3	_____
Bids, awards .....	3	_____
Contracts.....	5	_____
Correspondence .....	5	_____
Purchase orders.....	3	_____
Quotations, price .....	3	_____
Receiving slips .....	4	_____

SALES & MARKETING

Claims (loss or damage) .....	5	_____
Complaints .....	5	_____
Contract progress reports .....	3	_____
Contracts, customer.....	6	_____
Correspondence .....	3	_____
Invoices .....	6	_____
Mailing lists.....	2	_____
Market research studies & analysis .....	p	_____
Market surveys.....	5	_____
Order acknowledgments .....	4	_____
Price lists.....	p	_____
Shipping notices & reports .....	4	_____
Tax exempt sales.....	5	_____

TAXATION

Annuity or deferred payment plans .....	p	_____
Correspondence .....	20	_____
Exemption status.....	p	_____
Inventory reports .....	16	_____
Real estate .....	15	_____
Sales & use.....	p	_____
Social security.....	p	_____
Tax bills & statements.....	p	_____
Tax returns & working papers .....	p	_____

## GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING INFORMATION

Many of the updates and changes listed on this form may also be made through the Presbytery Portal. For more information about the Presbytery Portal, please reference page 007 – PCA Clerks Online Tools.

### **022 OFFICIAL CHANGE OF PRESBYTERY ROLLS – MINISTER – OR USE PORTAL**

*Clerk of **initiating presbytery***: The receiving presbytery should be the primary, or initiating, presbytery in a transfer. However, it is better for us to receive two sets of information rather than none at all. Remember that the change is not officially complete until both presbyteries have done their receiving/dismissing. A man remains in his presbytery until received by another.

- Mail copy to Stated Clerk of General Assembly or use Presbytery Portal.
- Keep a copy for your files.
- Mail 2 copies to clerk of other presbytery.

### **023 OFFICIAL CHANGE OF PRESBYTERY ROLLS – STATUS OF CHURCH/MISSIONS – OR USE PORTAL**

This form is for churches coming into or leaving the PCA or becoming a particular church from a mission work. This may also be done on the Presbytery Portal.

- Date Organized: Use if it has become a particular church from a mission work.
- Date Received: Use if it has come into the PCA from another denomination.
- Check Other Change of Status: If "Other", please tell us what other change there is.
- If both a church and pastor change status, please also send form 022.

### **024 OFFICIAL CHANGE NAME/ADDRESS/PHONE – OR USE PORTAL**

- If church meeting and mailing address differ, please indicate both. Also, if pastor's office phone is different from the main church number, please indicate.
- Please circle whether address change is for pastor or clerk of session.
- Please include area code with phone number.
- Please give the 4-digit extension on zip codes whenever possible.

### **FORMS 022, 023, 024**

***Please send changes to the PCA Stated Clerk's Office within 10 days.***

- The PCA Stated Clerk's Office accepts this information in "free form" via email to [records@pcanet.org](mailto:records@pcanet.org), or through the PCA Clerks Portal.
- Date and sign the form (or identify yourself if sending via email).
- No need to send certificates to the PCA Stated Clerk's Office.

### **Forms 025 and 026**

These two forms are used to compile the *PCA Yearbook*. Please encourage your members, especially new members to fill out these forms. They may also fill out the bio information online here:

Form **025 MINISTERIAL BIOGRAPHICAL DATA** is used for new ministers or ministers new to the PCA. Please ask these men to fill one out as soon as they are ordained and return it to the PCA Stated Clerk's Office.

Form **026 SUPPLEMENTAL MINISTERIAL BIOGRAPHICAL DATA** updates information in following years.

Please note that information submitted should not be abbreviated. Abbreviations that appear in the *Yearbook* are standardized, and the common abbreviation used for a term may not be used in some instances where, for example, two colleges are both known as UofP.

### **RPR MATERIALS**

In 2019, the General Assembly approved significant changes to how materials are submitted to RPR. RAO 16-4.a now states:

*The stated clerk of each presbytery is to provide the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly with copies of all minutes to be reviewed, in one of two formats: (1) four bound, paginated hard-copies or (2) two bound, paginated hard-copies and one paginated digital copy (preferably as a single document).*

So you should now send in your materials either:

-4 hard copies

**-or-**

-2 hard copies **and** 1 digital copy

When sending in **MINUTES** always send the approved minutes, directory, and standing rules. Minutes should be bound in some way – remember each set of minutes is then sent out to reviewers who may be getting minutes from multiple presbyteries at one time.

For instructions on how to submit digital records, please email Margie Mallow, [mmallow@pcanet.org](mailto:mmallow@pcanet.org).

### **OTHER INFORMATION TO BE SUBMITTED**

We depend on **ENROLLMENT REPORTS** for information about new churches/missions, pastors transferred in/out of the presbytery or denomination, candidates, licentiates and churches lost from the denomination.

**STATISTICS** FROM INDIVIDUAL CHURCHES are absolutely necessary in order to gather and distribute information about our denomination and its growth. We ask that Stated Clerks of presbyteries follow up to get churches to send them in.

**RESPONSE TO EXCEPTIONS  
FOR REVIEW OF PRESBYTERY RECORDS COMMITTEE  
OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Please refer to RAO 16-3, 16-4, 16-6 through 16-10 for a definition of RPR findings, an overview of RPR reporting, and guidelines for your response.

**Response to Exception Form** –Please type your response and email the form back to the Stated Clerk’s office in a Word document to [mmallow@pcanet.org](mailto:mmallow@pcanet.org) by **March 15, 2023**. We have this form available in both Word and PDF formats in the Clerks Handbook and online here: <http://www.pcaac.org/presbyterydownloads/>

**Your Presbytery’s Exceptions** – Exceptions of both form and substance, as well as notations made by the Committee, are sent to each presbytery. If you have not received your exceptions, please contact Margie Mallow at [mmallow@pcanet.org](mailto:mmallow@pcanet.org). . Exceptions of form are noted with an **[F]**, exceptions of substance with an **[S]**.

Your Presbytery needs to respond to exceptions of **substance only** (see RAO 16-10). Please do not submit a formal response to General Assembly on exceptions of form or notations, but be sure to take any appropriate action in the future in these matters.

Please use the following form for responses to exceptions.

**\* Major changes were made to the submission guidelines for the review of minutes and directories:**

- Minutes must be received in the Stated Clerk’s Office by **March 15, 2023**.
- You now have two options to submit your minutes for review:
  - (1) **four** bound, paginated hard-copies or
  - (2) **two** bound, paginated hard-copies **and one** paginated digital copy. If you choose this option, please see subsequent information for your digital file.
- Directories must now include the status of all candidates under care, interns and licentiates of the presbytery

**Response to Exceptions  
of the  
49th General Assembly  
Due by March 15, 2023**

**Presbytery:**

**Exception:**

Meeting Dates:

**Response:**

**Exception:**

Meeting Dates:

**Response:**

**Exception:**

Meeting Dates:

**Response:**

*Please return this form to the PCA Administrative Committee:*

*[mmallow@pcanet.org](mailto:mmallow@pcanet.org)*

*Presbyterian Church in America  
Attn: Margie Mallow, RPR Assistant  
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 105  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043*

## REVIEW OF PRESBYTERY RECORDS (RPR) REPORT

The full RPR Report is found online here: <http://www.pcaac.org/presbyterydownloads/>

Thank you for your faithful service as stated clerk of your presbytery. Please find attached information pertaining to the review of your presbytery's 2021 minutes at the 49<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. Please refer to RAO 16-6c, 16-7, and 16-10 for a definition of RPR findings, an overview of RPR reporting, and guidelines for your response.

The following items were sent to clerks – if you need this information please email Margie Mallow at [mmallow@pcanet.org](mailto:mmallow@pcanet.org):

- **Form for Response to Exceptions** – Please use the attached form “Response to Exceptions” to help our office track and compile your response for the Assembly’s review next year. Please email it to [mmallow@pcanet.org](mailto:mmallow@pcanet.org) in the form of a **Word** document. **This is due by March 15, 2023.** This form is also available online here: <http://www.pcaac.org/presbyterydownloads/>

- **Your Presbytery’s Exceptions** – Exceptions of both form and substance, as well as notations made by the Committee.

- Your presbytery needs to respond to exceptions of **substance only** (see RAO 16-10).
- Please do not submit a formal written response to General Assembly on exceptions of form or notations but be sure to take any appropriate action in the future on these matters.
- Please check item “c” to see if you have exceptions of substance; you will need to submit a formal response to the exceptions of substance. Note that you will be addressing your response to the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records of the **49th** General Assembly.
- Please also note item “d” (and item “e” if present) for the Assembly’s action on responses to any previous exceptions. If another response is required, please also use the attached form and identify the response accordingly.
- Any response from a previous year’s exception that has been ruled Unsatisfactory must have a new response.
- Please type your response and email the form as a Word document to: [mmallow@pcanet.org](mailto:mmallow@pcanet.org) **by March 15, 2023.**

### General Recommendations from the 2022 RPR Report

- Commend those Clerks who sent records for their hard work to create, keep, and submit their records, and every Presbytery who sent delegates to serve on the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records.
- Encourage Presbyteries to establish commissions to review their records early in the year so that the records may be sent in by the deadline.
- Urge those who failed to send reports or delegates to do so in the future. Note that 68 of 88 presbyteries had representatives appointed to the committee this year, with 54 attending the meeting (including 45 TEs and 9 REs).
- Remind Presbyteries that records (both hard-copies and digital) must be submitted by the deadline of March 15 of each year.
- Remind Presbyteries that records must be submitted in one of two formats: (1) four bound, paginated hard-copies or (2) two bound, paginated hard-copies and one paginated digital copy (preferably as a single document).
- Urge Presbyteries, when recording an examinee’s stated differences to the Confessional Standards, to record judgment on each stated difference using the wording of one of the four categories explicitly spelled out in RAO 16-3.e.5.a through d.



- Remind Presbyteries that the actions of their commissions are the actions of that presbytery, and the full record of each commission's proceedings must be included in subsequent presbytery minutes, either in the body of the minutes or as an addendum thereto (*BCO* 15-1).
- Remind Presbyteries that when GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary. Furthermore, remind Presbyteries to follow the guidelines for responding to GA in *RAO* 16-10.
- Remind Presbyteries that responses to GA's exceptions must be approved by the Presbytery, and such approval and the responses must be recorded in their minutes.
- Request that Presbyteries approve their responses to GA exceptions in the same calendar year in which the exceptions were taken. If not approved in the calendar year, Presbytery should supply a copy of minutes in which responses were approved.
- Remind Presbyteries that when exceptions of substance relate to items missing in the minutes, that action be taken to correct the minutes to remedy the exception.
- Ask Presbyteries, in the case when an examination for ordination refers to acceptance of an earlier licensure examination, to provide a citation of the prior minutes where that exam is recorded.
- Remind Presbyteries that they may, if they adopt it in their by-laws, approve meetings by telephone or video conference.
- Remind Presbyteries that some actions must be taken annually, including review of Session records, receiving reports from TEs without call, receiving reports from TEs laboring out-of-bounds, receiving reports from interns, receiving reports from candidates under care, and that record of such reports should be included in their minutes. Additionally, reports of interns by the committee charged with the oversight of interns must be received at each stated meeting.
- Request that the directories that are supplied to CRPR include the status (Pastor, Without Call, Out-of-Bounds, etc.) of each TE in the list of TEs and their addresses since that information is necessary to determine whether or not annual reports are required.
- Remind Presbyteries to ensure that their minutes are paginated.
- Request Presbyteries to encourage candidates to clarify their stated differences to the Standards when writing them in their own words to accurately reflect their view as presented to Presbytery.
- Remind Presbyteries that only actionable motions need to be recorded in the minutes.
- Remind Presbyteries to be attentive to making the appropriate edits to the ordination/installation template according to the particular context when creating minutes of these services.
- Encourage Presbytery Stated Clerks to attend the annual Presbytery Clerks' meeting in December.
- **Amend *RAO* 16-4.c** as follows (~~strike-through~~ for deletions, underlining for new wording).

- c. In addition to the minutes themselves, the presbytery shall submit ~~three (3) copies~~ a corresponding number of copies, in accordance with 16-4.a, of the following items.

So that the rule reads:

- c. In addition to the minutes themselves, the presbytery shall submit a corresponding number of copies, in accordance with 16-4.a, of the following items

RPR is slated to meet **May 31-June 2, 2023**.

Thank you for your efforts to advance the Kingdom of God through your service to your presbytery. Should you have any questions, please contact Margie Mallow at [mmallow@pcanet.org](mailto:mmallow@pcanet.org) or 678-825-1000.

To access the *BCO* and *RAO* online, please refer to [www.pcaac.org](http://www.pcaac.org).

## DIRECTORY AND ROLLS FOR PRESBYTERY USE

The Stated Clerk of Presbytery should keep several rolls. Updates to these rolls should be reported to the Office of the Stated Clerk as soon as possible.

Each Presbytery should keep a record of the signature of ministers as they have signed the Covenant at the time of enrollment as a member of the Presbytery. Some presbyteries repeat this annually to remind the ministers of the ordination vows. One of the most convenient ways of keeping this roll is to have a separate page provided for each minister to sign. When a minister moves from the Presbytery, his page can be removed to an inactive file. A sample page of the **Ministerial Obligation** is provided (see section 28).

- ☐ 1. There should be an up-to-date **Roll of all Ministers in the Presbytery**. This roll should include addresses and phone numbers.
- ☐ 2. There should be a complete and up-to-date **Roll of the Churches in the Presbytery**. This roll should include the address of the Church, and also the name and address of the Clerk of Session.
- ☐ 3. There should be an up-to-date **Roll of mission churches**, including the name and address of the contact person for the mission. Note *BCO* 5-4 through 5-6:

***BCO 5-4.***"At the discretion of the temporary governing body, members may be received into the mission church as prescribed in *BCO* 12. These persons then become communicant or non-communicant members of the Presbyterian Church in America."

***BCO 5-5.***"Mission churches and their members shall have the right of judicial process to the court having oversight of their temporary governing body."

***BCO 5-6.***"Mission churches shall maintain a roll of communicant and non-communicant members, in the same manner as, but separate from, other particular churches."

- ☐ 4. There should be an up-to-date **Roll of the Licentiates and Interns** of the Presbytery, including their addresses and phone numbers.
- ☐ 5. There should be an up-to-date **Roll of Candidates under the care** of Presbytery, including their addresses and phone numbers.
- ☐ 6. There may be other rolls, such as a list of **any minister(s) under disciplinary action** by the Presbytery, or the **names of individual members awaiting placement in a congregation**.

***Changes in rolls of ministers and churches should be reported to the PCA Stated Clerk's Office within ten days after the change has been made.***

Samples of forms for reporting of rolls to the Assembly, and for reporting the changes in rolls are reproduced in sections 022, 023 and 024. **You can also use the Presbytery Portal to report these changes.**

## PRESBYTERY ENROLLMENT REPORT FORM FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2022

PRESBYTERY \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Stated Clerk of Presbytery \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Phone)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, ST, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Churches/Missions added to the Presbytery roll during 2022:**  
(Please indicate if newly organized, received, or new Mission)

Name, address and phone number of Church: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Minister \_\_\_\_\_

Name, address and phone number of Church: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Minister \_\_\_\_\_

Name, address and phone number of Church: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Minister \_\_\_\_\_

Name, address and phone number of Church: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Minister \_\_\_\_\_

Name, address and phone number of Church: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Minister \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Churches lost from Presbytery roll during 2022:

Name of Church	Date Removed	How removed - To whom, if dismissed

### 3. Ministers added to Presbytery roll in 2022:

Name	Date Received	Date Ordained (new ministers) or former presbytery or denomination for others

#### 4. Ministers removed from Presbytery roll during 2022:

Name	Date Removed	Why removed - to where, if transferred

**5. Candidates under care of the Presbytery as of December 31, 2022:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____

**6. Licentiates of the Presbytery as of December 31, 2022:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____

(Use additional pages, if necessary)

- or -

**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT USING BLACK INK**

(Report within 10 days of change)

## OFFICIAL CHANGE OF PRESBYTERY ROLLS STATUS OF CHURCHES/MISSIONS

EMAIL: 1) [records@pcanet.org](mailto:records@pcanet.org) (or use the Presbytery Clerks Website) **and** 2) the dismissing or receiving presbytery when a transfer is being reported. Use this form to ensure all information is included.

- or -

HARD COPY: complete applicable portion(s) and send copies by regular mail to 1) PCA Stated Clerk's Office, 1700 N. Brown Rd., Suite 105, Lawrenceville, GA 30043, and 2) the dismissing or receiving presbytery when a transfer is being reported.

**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT USING BLACK INK**

**Effective Date of Change** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Report within 10 days of change)

Name of Church \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Mission Church

Address of Church \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Presbytery \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Church Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Church Fax (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Date formed as Mission Work \_\_\_\_\_ Date Organized \_\_\_\_\_

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of previous affiliation

Date Dissolved \_\_\_\_\_ Date Transferred \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of body to which transferred

**Other Change of Status:** ☐ to particular church  
☐ to mission church  
☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor of Church (first) \_\_\_\_\_ (middle) \_\_\_\_\_ (last) \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk of Session \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** If both a church and a pastor change status, please also complete form 022, the **OFFICIAL CHANGE OF PRESBYTERY ROLLS – MINISTER**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## OFFICIAL CHANGE OF PRESBYTERY ROLLS NAME/ADDRESS/PHONE

EMAIL: [records@pcanet.org](mailto:records@pcanet.org) (or use the Presbytery Clerks Website)

- or -

HARD COPY: complete applicable portion(s) and send copies by regular mail to the PCA Stated Clerk's Office, 1700 N. Brown Rd., Suite 105, Lawrenceville, GA 30043

**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT USING BLACK INK**

**Effective Date of Change** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Report within 10 days of change)

### **CHURCH CHANGES**

**New Name of Church** \_\_\_\_\_

Old Name of Church \_\_\_\_\_

**New Address - Meeting** \_\_\_\_\_  
Street

city state zip  
**Mailing (if different)** \_\_\_\_\_  
street

**Old Address** \_\_\_\_\_  
city state zip  
street

city state zip

**New Church Phone** (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ **New Church Fax** (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

### **MINISTER/CLERK OF SESSION CHANGES**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Minister ☐ Clerk

(If new Clerk of Session, please give name of former Clerk)

**New Address** \_\_\_\_\_  
Street

city state zip

**New Home Phone** (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ **New Office Phone** (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
(if different from church)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery



## MINISTERIAL BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Information for the Ministerial Directory of the *Yearbook* of the Presbyterian Church in America. Please fill out this form as completely as possible. If additional space is needed, use additional pages. Please type or print plainly.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PRESBYTERY MEMBERSHIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE# \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MOTHER'S FULL MAIDEN NAME \_\_\_\_\_

WIFE'S FULL MAIDEN NAME

PLACE OF MARRIAGE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF MARRIAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DIVORCED: yes      no      ; Please also give information on any former wives:

NAMES OF CHILDREN (If a daughter is married, give her married name in parenthesis)

EDUCATION - universities and/or colleges attended, date and degrees earned:\_\_\_\_\_

Give names of seminaries attended, dates and degrees earned: \_\_\_\_\_

Honorary degrees, name of institution, date and degree: \_\_\_\_\_

LICENSURE Date: \_\_\_\_\_ By Whom: \_\_\_\_\_

ORDINATION Date: \_\_\_\_\_ By Whom: \_\_\_\_\_

MINISTERIAL SERVICE (give title, place and dates): \_\_\_\_\_

BOOKS PUBLISHED (Ecclesiastical only, please)\_\_\_\_\_

OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: Stated Clerk's Office, 1700 North Brown Rd., Ste. 105, Lawrenceville, GA 30043**

**Email: [records@pcanet.org](mailto:records@pcanet.org)**

### SUPPLEMENTAL MINISTERIAL BIOGRAPHICAL FORM

You can find a copy of your current biographical sketch as we have it by looking in the most recent edition of the *Yearbook*. Please check your sketch carefully for accuracy and indicate any corrections or additions in the space below.

**We will assume the above is correct if we do not hear from you.**  
NOTE ANY CORRECTIONS OR ADDITIONS TO YOUR SKETCH.

**PRESBYTERY MEMBERSHIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY  
DATA \_\_\_\_\_

LICENSURE Date: \_\_\_\_\_ PRESBYTERY \_\_\_\_\_

ORDINATION Date: \_\_\_\_\_ PRESBYTERY \_\_\_\_\_

MINISTERIAL SERVICE: (Give title, places and dates): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

BOOKS PUBLISHED (Ecclesiastical only, please): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS AND PHONE:

Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Church/Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Office of the Stated Clerk, 1700 North Brown Rd., Suite 105, Lawrenceville, GA 30043  
Email: [records@pcanet.org](mailto:records@pcanet.org)

# APPLICATION FOR CANDIDATES TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY

*Presbyterian Church in America*

## THE PRESBYTERY OF \_\_\_\_\_

(please print or type your answers)

### I. PERSONAL HISTORY

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

2. Present Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(street)

\_\_\_\_\_ (city) \_\_\_\_\_ (state) \_\_\_\_\_ (zip)

3. Birth date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

4. Your baptism: infant? \_\_\_\_ other? \_\_\_\_ by which church? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Where is your church membership? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Marital status \_\_\_\_\_ If married, supply the following:  
date of marriage \_\_\_\_\_ number of children \_\_\_\_\_ dependents \_\_\_\_\_

7. Your present occupation (if student, give institution and class) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Formal education record (list last three institutions you attended)

Institution	Dates	Major	Grade Avg.	Degree
1.	from ____ / ____ to ____ / ____			
2.	from ____ / ____ to ____ / ____			
3.	from ____ / ____ to ____ / ____			

9. Employment record (list last two employers)

Employer	Address	Dates employed
1.		From ____ to ____
2.		From ____ to ____

10. Name below five references that know you well, including your pastor, a person your own age, and one of your professors or employers:

Name	Address
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

## II. PERSONAL INFORMATION:

1. Describe your relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. When did you become a Christian?
2. At this point, what sense of call to the ministry do you have? What people and experiences have influenced you to make this application for candidacy?
3. What activities and organizations have you been involved in that have given you an opportunity for Christian service?
4. What are the attitudes of your parents (if living) and spouse (if married) toward your decision to make application for candidacy?

5. Describe your personal devotional life and other means by which you seek to grow as a Christian.
6. In what ways can the presbytery be helpful to you during a period of candidacy, should this application be accepted?
7. Have you ever applied to be received under care of any other presbytery or church body? If yes, give name of presbytery or church body and date of application.

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL THIS FORM TO:

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ENDORSEMENT OF PRESBYTERY (to be completed by the Candidates Committee)

This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_ was received as a candidate

on \_\_\_\_\_, by the Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman's signature \_\_\_\_\_

**SESSIONAL CERTIFICATION  
OF AN APPLICANT FOR CANDIDACY  
FOR THE GOSPEL MINISTRY**

*Presbyterian Church in America*

**IN THE PRESBYTERY OF \_\_\_\_\_**

The session should invite the applicant to meet with the session (or session's committee first, then with session). **IN NO CASE SHOULD THIS COMPLETED FORM BE SEEN BY THE APPLICANT.**

1. How does the session evaluate the applicant's Christian character?

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Other comments:

2. Does the session recommend this applicant for candidacy? Would this recommendation be with any qualifications? If so, what?

STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION: We, the session of \_\_\_\_\_  
Presbyterian Church, certify that the above applicant has been a member of the church since \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and we commend this member to the Committee on Candidates as an  
applicant for candidacy for the Gospel Ministry.

Signature of Moderator of the Session \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please comment on the applicant's character:
2. Please comment on the applicant's Christian commitment:
3. Please comment on the applicant's discipline and perseverance:

11/13

4. Please comment on the applicant's emotional stability:
5. Please comment on the applicant's capacity to relate to people:
6. Please comment on the applicant's level of maturity:
7. Would you have any reservations in recommending to our committee that they accept this applicant as a candidate?

Signature of Reference \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to this address: \_\_\_\_\_

---

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**DIARY OF A CANDIDATE  
COMMITTEE ON CANDIDATES**

*Presbyterian Church in America*

**THE PRESBYTERY OF \_\_\_\_\_**

(This form should be kept by the Chairman of the Committee on Candidates.)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

HOME CHURCH \_\_\_\_\_

RECEIVED BY PRESBYTERY \_\_\_\_\_

TRANSFERRED / ORDAINED \_\_\_\_\_

(Various contacts by the Committee should be noted.)

Date	Diary

## REPORT FOR MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES

(To be filled out once a year by candidates)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Summer address \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent address \_\_\_\_\_

Are you married? \_\_\_\_\_ If you have children, what are their names and ages? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Degrees held / institutions granting \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

School attending \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

What is the grade scale for your school? \_\_\_\_\_ Where do you place? \_\_\_\_\_

Work, if not attending school \_\_\_\_\_

Do you plan to return to theological studies? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you definite plans for work this summer? If so, what are those plans? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you receiving the minutes of Presbytery? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been called to a church, or are you making plans for ordination at the end of the school year? \_\_\_\_\_ Where, or for what reason? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you still feel that you are called to the Gospel Ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you attend public worship? \_\_\_\_\_ regularly? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your pattern of private devotions \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have family devotions on a regular basis? \_\_\_\_\_

Could we on the committee be of particular help to you in your spiritual life, or in any other area that should normally concern us? (Please use the back to answer.)

## MINISTERIAL OBLIGATION

(see *BCO* 13-7)

Believing the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice; and

Sincerely receiving and adopting the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and further promising that if at any time I find myself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, I will on my own initiative, make known to my Presbytery the change which has taken place in my views since the assumption of my ordination vows; and

Approving of the form of government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in America as being in conformity with the general principles of Biblical polity; and

Promising subjection to my brethren in the Lord; and

Having been induced, as far as I know my own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the Gospel of His son; and

Promising to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto me on that account; and

Engaging to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all my duties as a Christian and a minister of the Gospel, whether personal or relational, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in my manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the flock of which God shall make me overseer; therefore

I, \_\_\_\_\_, do sincerely receive and subscribe to the above obligation as a just and true exhibition of my faith and principles, and do resolve and promise to exercise my ministry in conformity therewith.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Date ordained: \_\_\_\_\_

By whom: \_\_\_\_\_

## **CERTIFICATE OF LICENSURE**

This form available on parchment through:

PCA Bookstore  
1700 N. Brown Road, Ste. 102  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043  
1-800-283-1357  
[www.pcabookstore.com](http://www.pcabookstore.com)

See other side for form.

# Certificate of Licensure

At \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A.D. \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery, having received testimonials commending  
\_\_\_\_\_ and evidence that he is a communicant of the Church,  
that he leads a godly and exemplary life, that he has pursued suitable courses of study, and has satisfactorily  
completed the prescribed examination, has licensed him to preach the Gospel within the bounds of this  
Presbytery for a period of four years. May the blessing of the almighty God rest upon him, and the Spirit of  
Christ fill his heart.



**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

Moderator\_\_\_\_\_

Stated Clerk\_\_\_\_\_

## **CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION**

This form available on parchment through:

PCA Bookstore  
1700 N. Brown Road, Ste. 102  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043  
1-800-283-1357  
[www.pcabookstore.com](http://www.pcabookstore.com)

See other side for form.

# ***Certificate of Ordination***

---

*has been examined for the ministry under the provisions of the Constitution of the*



**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

*and having been approved by the Presbytery, has been ordained, with prayer  
and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, to the office of*

## **Teaching Elder**

*(MINISTER OF THE WORD)*

*at \_\_\_\_\_ by the Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_*

*on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year of our Lord \_\_\_\_\_.*

---

*Stated Clerk of Presbytery*

---

*Moderator of Presbytery*

“Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God” (I Corinthians 4:1)

“And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron” (Hebrews 5:4)

“Those who fill this office should be blameless in life and sound in the faith, men of wisdom and discretion. By the holiness of their walk and conversation they should be examples of Christian faith.” — *Book of Church Order*

***Definite work to  
which called:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Call issued by:*** \_\_\_\_\_  
(church, agency for specific ministry)

## **The Call to a Particular Ministry**

This form is available on parchment through:

PCA Bookstore  
1700 N. Brown Road, Ste. 102  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043  
1-800-283-1357  
[www.pcabookstore.com](http://www.pcabookstore.com)

See other side for form.



# *The Call to a Particular Ministry*

*The Church of \_\_\_\_\_, being on sufficient grounds well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you, \_\_\_\_\_ and having good hopes from our knowledge of your labors that your ministrations in the Gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord.*

*That you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ a year in regular monthly payments, and other benefits, such as manse \_\_\_\_\_, annuity \_\_\_\_\_, medical insurance \_\_\_\_\_, vacation \_\_\_\_\_, moving expenses \_\_\_\_\_, other \_\_\_\_\_, during the time of your being and continuing the regular pastor of this church.*

*In testimony whereof we have respectively subscribed our name this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A.D. \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Attest: I, having moderated the congregational meeting which extended a call to \_\_\_\_\_ for his ministerial services, do certify that the call has been made in all respects according to the rules laid down in the *Book of Church Order*, and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.*

---

*(Moderator of the Meeting)*

## **Certificate of Honorable Retirement**

This certificate is available in the digital Clerks Handbook for your own printing needs.

Please download the Clerks Handbook here:  
<http://www.pcaac.org/presbyterydownloads/>



# Certificate of Honorable Retirement

**This Is to Certify**

*That the Reverend* \_\_\_\_\_

*Is a member in good standing in the*

*Presbytery of* \_\_\_\_\_

*Of the Presbyterian Church in America,*

*And is now being designated honorably retired.*

*Done in Presbytery on this* \_\_\_\_\_ *of* \_\_\_\_\_, *A.D.* \_\_\_\_\_

*Attest:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Presbytery*

## **CERTIFICATE OF DISMISSION**

See other side for form.

# Certificate of Dismission of a Minister



**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

## *THIS IS TO CERTIFY*

*that the Reverend* \_\_\_\_\_

*IS A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING IN THE*

*Presbytery of* \_\_\_\_\_

*Presbyterian Church in America*

*AND IS NOW, AT HIS OWN REQUEST, DISMISSED TO THE*

*Presbytery of* \_\_\_\_\_

*TO WHICH HE IS HEREBY RECOMMENDED*

*Done in Presbytery on this* \_\_\_\_\_ *of* \_\_\_\_\_, A.D. \_\_\_\_\_

*Attest:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Presbytery*

---

# Certificate of Reception

*This is to certify that the Reverend* \_\_\_\_\_

*was received by the Presbytery of* \_\_\_\_\_

*in session at* \_\_\_\_\_

*on* \_\_\_\_\_ *A.D.* \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Stated Clerk of Presbytery*

## **PRESBYTERIAL DISMISSAL OF A CANDIDATE**

This form available on parchment through:

PCA Bookstore  
1700 N. Brown Road, Ste. 102  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043  
1-800-283-1357  
[www.cepbookstore.com](http://www.cepbookstore.com)

See other side for form.

# *Presbyterial Dismissal of a Candidate*

This is to certify

that Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ is a Candidate in good and regular standing  
under the care of this Presbytery, and that he is, at his own request, hereby dismissed to place himself under the  
care of \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery to whose  
ecclesiastical supervision and affectionate regard he is cordially recommended.



Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Stated Clerk of \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery

Done in Presbytery this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A.D. \_\_\_\_\_

## FORMS OF CALL

To aid the work of our presbytery clerks, we have created a catch-all for helpful language and forms to be used when issuing a call.

**Below is the standard wording found in BCO 20-6 to be used when issuing a call:**

**20-6.** Form of call: The terms of the call shall be approved by the congregation in the following or like form:

The \_\_\_\_\_ Church being on sufficient grounds well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you, \_\_\_\_\_, and having good hopes from our knowledge of your labors that your ministrations in the Gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. That you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ a year in regular monthly (or quarterly) payments, and other benefits, such as, manse, retirement, insurance, vacations, moving expenses etc., during the time of your being and continuing the regular pastor of this church.

In testimony whereof we have respectively subscribed our names this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A.D. \_\_\_\_\_.

Attest: I, having moderated the congregational meeting which extended a call to \_\_\_\_\_ for his ministerial services, do certify that the call has been made in all respects according to the rules laid down in the *Book of Church Order*, and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Moderator of the Meeting



Also helpful when issuing a call is BCO Appendix J:

## APPENDIX J

### SAMPLE FORM FOR TERMS OF CALL

Subject to the approval of the \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery, the \_\_\_\_\_ (*Session, or Congregation, or Session on behalf of the congregation*) of \_\_\_\_\_ Church in \_\_\_\_\_ earnestly calls you, \_\_\_\_\_, to undertake the office of \_\_\_\_\_ in our congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. That you may be free from worldly care and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to provide you with the following:

Annual Cash Salary & Housing Allowance, paid \_\_\_\_\_ (*semi-monthly, etc.*) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

The amount/portion dedicated to housing allowance will be determined by the Minister and approved by the Session before employment with the church in this new position and shall be reviewed prior to each fiscal year.

#### Primary Benefits

Social Security/Medicare Allowance: \_\_\_\_\_ % of salary + housing \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Medical Insurance &/or Medicare Supplement Insurance (specific \$ amount) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Retirement Savings: \_\_\_\_\_ % of salary + housing \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Long Term Disability Insurance: enough to replace \_\_\_\_\_ % of salary + housing \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Life Insurance: amount equal to \_\_\_\_\_ x (salary + housing) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Equity Allowance if Minister living in a manse \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Secondary Benefits

Dental Insurance \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Vision Insurance \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Long Term Care Insurance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Temporary Benefits

Relocation expenses reimbursed up to a maximum of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Miscellaneous Paid Leaves per year. (Any specific church policies are described in a separate document.)

Vacation _____ days	Sick Leave _____ days
Educational Leave _____ days	Paternity Leave _____ days
Sabbatical Leave accrual _____ days	Funeral Leave _____ days

Any reimbursement of reasonable and necessary business expenses shall be in accord with a Session-adopted Accountable Reimbursement Plan, with a maximum amount specified in the annual church budget.

I, having moderated the \_\_\_\_\_ (*Session or Congregational*) meeting which extended a call to \_\_\_\_\_ for his ministerial services, do certify the call has been made in all respects according to the rules in the PCA *Book of Church Order* and the persons who signed the call were authorized to do so by vote of the \_\_\_\_\_ (*Session or Congregation*).

(*Check if applicable*) \_\_\_\_\_ Authority to approve these Terms was delegated by the Congregation to the Session at a congregational meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

Meeting Moderator (sign) \_\_\_\_\_ Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_ Phone or e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_ Vote: # Yes = \_\_\_\_\_ # No = \_\_\_\_\_

Minister-Elect (sign) \_\_\_\_\_ Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Send a copy to the Presbytery Clerk.

## **CERTIFICATION CARDS**

This form available on printed cards through:

PCA Stated Clerk's Office  
1700 N. Brown Road, Ste. 105  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043  
678-825-1000  
[ac@pcanet.org](mailto:ac@pcanet.org)

See other side for form.

**NOTE: It may be helpful to place the Presbytery Clerk's name, address and phone number on the reverse of the Certification Card.**

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE



REV. \_\_\_\_\_  
IS AN ORDAINED MINISTER IN GOOD AND REGULAR  
STANDING IN THE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESBYTERY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN  
AMERICA.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*This identification card is valid for one year from this date.*

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE



REV. \_\_\_\_\_  
IS AN ORDAINED MINISTER IN GOOD AND REGULAR  
STANDING IN THE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESBYTERY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN  
AMERICA.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*This identification card is valid for one year from this date.*

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE



REV. \_\_\_\_\_  
IS AN ORDAINED MINISTER IN GOOD AND REGULAR  
STANDING IN THE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESBYTERY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN  
AMERICA.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*This identification card is valid for one year from this date.*

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE



REV. \_\_\_\_\_  
IS AN ORDAINED MINISTER IN GOOD AND REGULAR  
STANDING IN THE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESBYTERY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN  
AMERICA.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*This identification card is valid for one year from this date.*

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE



REV. \_\_\_\_\_  
IS AN ORDAINED MINISTER IN GOOD AND REGULAR  
STANDING IN THE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESBYTERY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN  
AMERICA.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*This identification card is valid for one year from this date.*

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE



REV. \_\_\_\_\_  
IS AN ORDAINED MINISTER IN GOOD AND REGULAR  
STANDING IN THE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESBYTERY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN  
AMERICA.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*This identification card is valid for one year from this date.*

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE



REV. \_\_\_\_\_  
IS AN ORDAINED MINISTER IN GOOD AND REGULAR  
STANDING IN THE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESBYTERY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN  
AMERICA.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*This identification card is valid for one year from this date.*

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE



REV. \_\_\_\_\_  
IS AN ORDAINED MINISTER IN GOOD AND REGULAR  
STANDING IN THE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESBYTERY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN  
AMERICA.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*This identification card is valid for one year from this date.*

## VERIFICATION OF ORDINATION AND LETTERS OF GOOD STANDING

Documents such as these are usually generated by the Presbytery Clerk of the presbytery in which a pastor was ordained, with the blessing of the presbytery of current membership to ensure that there is no outstanding disciplinary issue, etc.

If a pastor was ordained prior to the formation of the PCA, the PCA Stated Clerk's Office will be happy to help him (see sample below on the right). In this case, please contact the office at [ac@pcanet.org](mailto:ac@pcanet.org).

Depending on the reason for the need or requirement of requesting organization, various responses will satisfy the request for verification of ordination/licensure or a letter of good standing:

- a copy of the Certificate of Ordination (030)
- a Certification Card (034), or
- a letter of good standing (see sample below on the left).

September 30, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to confirm that Rev. XXXX is a Teaching Elder in good standing in the Presbyterian Church in America. Rev. XXXX was ordained in July 2007, by the Metro Atlanta Presbytery, Presbyterian Church in America.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXX  
Stated Clerk of Metro Atlanta Presbytery  
Presbyterian Church in America

September 30, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to confirm that Rev. XXXX is a Teaching Elder in good standing in the Presbyterian Church in America. Rev. XXXX was ordained in July 1965, by the Great Plains Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod was received into the Presbyterian Church in America in 1981.

Sincerely,

Bryan Chapell  
Stated Clerk  
Presbyterian Church in America

## CHECKLIST FOR CANDIDATE COMING UNDER CARE OF PRESBYTERY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Any extraordinary circumstances: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Examination by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Endorsements received and read

\_\_\_\_\_ Experiential religion

\_\_\_\_\_ Motives for seeking the ministry

\_\_\_\_\_ Examination arrested

\_\_\_\_\_ Examination sustained

\_\_\_\_\_ Motion to receive candidate

\_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery mentor approved

Name of Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Questions asked by the Moderator (*BCO* 18-3) and answered affirmatively

- 1. Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a becoming Christian character, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for the sacred ministry?**
- 2. Do you promise to submit yourself to the proper supervision of the Presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for the ministry?**

\_\_\_\_\_ Charge by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Prayer by: \_\_\_\_\_

## CHECKLIST FOR LICENSURE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Examination by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Sermon presented in written form to the committee, orally presented to the Presbytery and approved by the Presbytery

\_\_\_\_\_ Statement of Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel

\_\_\_\_\_ Basic knowledge of Bible doctrine as outlined in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the PCA

\_\_\_\_\_ Practical knowledge of the English Bible

\_\_\_\_\_ Basic knowledge of the government of the PCA as outlined in the *BCO*

\_\_\_\_\_ Stated differences with Westminster Confession and Catechisms (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3, e., 5) – record stated differences in their own words and the action of Presbytery on each stated difference): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Parts of Examination Sustained

\_\_\_\_\_ Examination sustained as a Whole and proceed to License

\_\_\_\_\_ Questions (*BCO* 19-3) asked and answered affirmatively

- 1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?**
- 2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scripture?**
- 3. Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the Church?**
- 4. Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this Presbytery, or of any other into the bounds of which you may be called?**

\_\_\_\_\_ Prayer by the Moderator

\_\_\_\_\_ Charge by the Moderator:

**"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that authority which He has given to the Church for its edification, we do license you to preach the Gospel in this Presbytery wherever God in His providence may call you; and for this purpose may the blessing of God rest upon you, and the Spirit of Christ fill your heart. Amen."**

## CHECKLIST FOR INTERNSHIP

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Church Membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Steps to enrolling a Candidate as an Intern:

\_\_\_\_\_ Candidate under care of Presbytery (may be licentiate, but not necessarily)

\_\_\_\_\_ Written and/or oral statement of inward call to ministry

\_\_\_\_\_ Internship program presented and approved

\_\_\_\_\_ Prayer by the Moderator

\_\_\_\_\_ Charge by the Moderator (*BCO* 19-10):

**"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that authority which He has given to the Church for its edification, we do declare you to be an intern of this Presbytery as a means of testing your gifts for the holy ministry wherever God in His providence may call you; and for this purpose may the blessing of God rest upon you, and the Spirit of Christ fill your heart. Amen."**

## CHECKLIST FOR ORDINATION

### See *BCO 21-4*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Preliminary Checklist:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Candidate under care of presbytery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Testimonials pertaining to candidate's internship
- \_\_\_\_\_ Internship approved
- \_\_\_\_\_ College diploma(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Seminary diploma(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Or, certification that ordinand has completed a regular course of theological studies approved by both General Assembly and Presbytery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Thesis on theological topic approved by presbytery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Exegetical study approved by presbytery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sermon preached before Presbytery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sermon approved by Presbytery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Written call or letter certifying a call from a congregation or appropriate body: \_\_\_\_\_

Examination by: \_\_\_\_\_

(Reminder: Per "RAO" 16-3.e.5, minutes are to reflect examination categories.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Christian Experience
- \_\_\_\_\_ Knowledge of both Greek and Hebrew (Exam or Seminary degree)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bible Content
- \_\_\_\_\_ Theology
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sacraments
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church History and History of the PCA
- \_\_\_\_\_ Principles and Rules of Government and Discipline of PCA
- \_\_\_\_\_ Differences with *Westminster Confession*, and *Catechisms*  
(*BCO 21-4*, "RAO" 16-3.e.5 – record stated differences in their own words and action of Presbytery on each stated difference) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Use of Extraordinary Clause, stating unusual circumstances, reasons for omission(s), part(s) omitted, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote (*BCO 21-4*): \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ If US ordinand intends to opt out of Social Security, certification that he has biblically conscientious objections to Social Security (IRS Form 4361).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Parts of Examination Sustained
- \_\_\_\_\_ Examination Sustained as a Whole
- \_\_\_\_\_ Motion to Receive into Presbytery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Call presented to Presbytery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Call found in order
- \_\_\_\_\_ Call placed in hands of candidate
- \_\_\_\_\_ Candidate indicates desire to accept call
- \_\_\_\_\_ Appointment of Commission to Ordain and Install (Quorum 2+2)
- TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_
- TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_
- TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Signing of Ministerial Obligation



**CHECKLIST FOR RECEPTION FROM ANOTHER PRESBYTERY IN THE PCA**  
**See BCO 13-6 and 20-9**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Preliminary Checklist:

\_\_\_\_\_ Written credentials from dismissing presbytery or other denomination  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Ordinarily (BCO 13-5) a written call or letter certifying a call from a  
 congregation or appropriate body: \_\_\_\_\_

Examination by: \_\_\_\_\_

(Reminder: Per "RAO" 16-3.e.5, minutes are to reflect examination categories.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Christian Experience  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Theology  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Sacraments  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Principles and Rules of Government and Discipline of PCA  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Changes in previous view of *Confession, Catechisms*, or  
 (BCO 21-4, "RAO" 16-3.e.5 --record stated differences in  
 their own words): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Use of Extraordinary Clause, if a minister transfers from another  
 denomination (BCO 21-4; 13-6), stating unusual circumstances, reason(s)  
 for omissions, part(s) omitted, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote.

\_\_\_\_\_ Parts of Examination Sustained  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Examination Sustained as a Whole  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Motion to Receive into Presbytery  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Ordinarily (BCO 13-5) a written call or letter certifying a call from a  
 congregation or appropriate body :  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Call presented to Presbytery  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Call found in order  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Call placed in hands of minister  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Minister indicates desire to accept call  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Appointment of Commission to Ordain and Install (Quorum 2+2)

TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_  
 TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_  
 TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Signing of Ministerial Obligation

**CHECKLIST FOR RECEPTION OF MINISTER FROM ANOTHER DENOMINATION**  
**See BCO 13-6 and 21-4**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Preliminary Checklist:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Written credentials from dismissing denomination  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Written call or letter certifying call from congregation or appropriate body:

\_\_\_\_\_ College diploma  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Seminary diploma  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Sermon preached before Presbytery  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Sermon approved by Presbytery

Examination by: \_\_\_\_\_

(Reminder: Per "RAO" 16-3.e.5, minutes are to reflect examination categories.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Christian Experience  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Knowledge of Greek and Hebrew (Exam or Seminary Degree)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Bible Content  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Theology  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Sacraments  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Church History  
 \_\_\_\_\_ History of the PCA  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Principles and Rules of Government and Discipline of PCA  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Differences with *Confession, Catechisms, or Book of Church Order* (BCO 21-4, "RAO" 16-3.e.5 --record stated differences in their own words): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Use of Extraordinary Clause (if a minister transfers from another denomination (BCO 21-4; 13-6), stating unusual circumstances, reason(s) for omissions, part(s) omitted, and  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority vote.): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Examination Sustained  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Examination Sustained as a Whole  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Motion to Receive into Presbytery  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Call presented to Presbytery  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Call found in order  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Call placed in hands of candidate  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Candidate indicates desire to accept call  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Questions in BCO 21-5 Asked and Answered in Affirmative  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Appointment of Commission to Install (Quorum 2+2)  
     TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_  
     TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_  
     TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Signing of Ministerial Obligation

**CHECKLIST FOR RECEPTION OF A CHURCH FROM ANOTHER DENOMINATION**  
**See BCO 13-8**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Commission Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery receives a communication/petition from a congregation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery appoints a commission to meet with the church's ruling elders to make certain that the elders understand and sincerely adopt the doctrines and polity of the Presbyterian Church of American as contained in the Constitution.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ruling elders affirm the ordination vows required of officers at their ordination in the presence of the commission.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Commission reports to presbytery.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery approves the minutes of the commission and records the reception of the congregation into Presbytery and the PCA.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery reports the church's reception to [records@pcanet.org](mailto:records@pcanet.org).

## REPORT OF COMMISSION TO ORDAIN/INSTALL

Report of the Commission to ordain/install Mr./Rev. \_\_\_\_\_  
as Pastor of \_\_\_\_\_.

The Commission met on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m.  
at the church (or at \_\_\_\_\_). A quorum was present.

Commission members present were:

TE _____	RE _____
TE _____	RE _____
TE _____	RE _____

Others Present: \_\_\_\_\_

The Commission meeting was called to order and opened with prayer by \_\_\_\_\_.  
Mr./Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ was elected chairman and  
Mr./Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ was elected Secretary of the Commission. The  
order of Worship was reviewed and approved by the Commission. The minutes were  
read and approved. The Commission recessed with prayer by \_\_\_\_\_  
for the ordination/installation service.

The Chairman presided in the sanctuary service, which was opened with singing, prayer  
and Scripture reading. The sermon was preached by Rev. \_\_\_\_\_,  
on the topic/text: \_\_\_\_\_.

The Chairman stated briefly the previous proceedings of the Presbytery, and pointed out  
the nature and importance of the ordination/installation ordinance.

The Chairman propounded the constitutional questions to the Candidate/Minister (*BCO*  
21-5 or 21-9) and these were answered in the affirmative. The Chairman then  
propounded the constitutional questions to the congregation (*BCO* 21-6 or 21-10), and  
these were answered in the affirmative by the Members holding up their right hands. The  
Candidate then kneeled and was set apart to the holy office of the Gospel Ministry with  
prayer and the laying on of hands. (Or \_\_\_\_\_ led in prayer as  
\_\_\_\_\_ was installed as Pastor of the congregation.) He then rose and the  
Members of the Commission gave him the right hand of fellowship. The Chairman then  
declared that Mr./Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ had been regularly elected,  
(ordained), and installed as Pastor of the Church.

A charge to the Pastor was delivered by Mr./Rev. \_\_\_\_\_.

A charge to the Congregation was delivered by Mr./Rev. \_\_\_\_\_.

Following prayer and singing, the new Pastor pronounced the benediction. The minutes  
having been approved, the Benediction closed this portion of the Commission's business.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

**SAMPLE AGENDA FOR A  
ORDINATION AND/OR INSTALLATION COMMISSION**

1. Call to Order by the Convener and Opening Prayer
2. Determination of a Quorum (Note—BCO requires two REs and two TEs)
3. Election of Chairman and Secretary
4. Review and approval of Worship Service
5. Reading and Approval of Minutes
6. Commission recessed until the time of the Worship Service
7. Worship Service (The BCO specifies the following to be included.)
  - Commission reconvened with opening prayer of the Worship Service
  - Sermon (BCO 21-5)
  - Explanation of Proceedings (21-5)
  - Constitutional Questions (21-5-6)
  - Prayer of Ordination and/or Installation (21-7)
  - Right hand of fellowship
  - Declaration of Ordination and/or Installation (21-7)
  - Charge to Pastor/Assistant or Associate Pastor (21-7)
  - Charge to the Congregation (21-7)
  - Prayer (21-7)
  - Hymn
  - Benediction (By newly ordained and/or installed Pastor)

NOTE: If the minutes were not previously read and approved then the commission must meet following the service to read and approve them.

## REPORT OF COMMISSION TO ORGANIZE A MISSION CHURCH AND ORDAIN/INSTALL PASTOR

Commission of \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery to organize \_\_\_\_\_  
Mission Church, install and/or ordain pastor.

The Commission convened on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_am/pm, at the  
church (or at \_\_\_\_\_).

Commission members present were: (Quorum - as specified by Presbytery, but not less  
than two TEs and two REs)

Teaching Elders: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairman): \_\_\_\_\_

Ruling Elders: \_\_\_\_\_

Others present: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

The following have been elected to the office of Ruling Elder and Deacon by the  
members of \_\_\_\_\_ Mission Church from the list of  
those found qualified by the Commission:

\_\_\_\_\_

TE \_\_\_\_\_ has been elected as pastor by the communicant members of  
the \_\_\_\_\_ Mission Church.

The Commission recessed with prayer by \_\_\_\_\_ for the service of  
Organization (and Ordination/Installation of the Pastor).

A sermon was preached by TE \_\_\_\_\_ on the topic/text: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (of the Commission) asked the members of the  
mission congregation the question for entering into church covenant contained in  
*BCO* 5-9i(3) which was answered affirmatively by the congregation with uplifted  
hands. \_\_\_\_\_ then declared that \_\_\_\_\_  
Mission Church was constituted as a church in the PCA (*BCO* 5-9i(4)).

The Sermon having been heard during the Worship Service, the presiding minister,  
\_\_\_\_\_, stated the warrant and nature of the office of Ruling Elder and  
Deacon together with the proper character to be sustained and the duties to be  
fulfilled per *BCO* 24-5. The 6 questions in *BCO* 24-5 were addressed to the Ruling  
Elder candidates and each responded affirmatively to the questions. The question  
to the congregation in *BCO* 24-5 was made and they answered in the affirmative  
by holding up their right hands.

A Dedicatory Prayer was offered for \_\_\_\_\_ who had previously been  
ordained as Ruling Elders. The Candidates, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ,

then kneeled and were set apart with prayer and the laying on of hands to the office of Ruling Elder and Deacon. The new officers were then given the right hand of fellowship. The Minister then declared that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(names of all Ruling Elders and Deacons)

had been regularly elected, ordained and installed as Ruling Elders and Deacons of the church using the words of *BCO* 24-5. The Minister then addressed a charge to the Officers and to the church.

The Chairman led in the installation (ordination & installation of \_\_\_\_\_ as pastor of the newly established particular church. He stated briefly the previous proceedings of the Presbytery, and pointed out the nature and importance of the (ordination/installation) ordinance.

The Chairman propounded the constitutional questions (in *BCO* 21-5 for a Candidate, *BCO* 21-9 for a Minister, and *BCO* 21-11 for an Evangelist) to the Candidate/Minister and these were answered in the affirmative. The Chairman then propounded the constitutional questions (in *BCO* 21-6 or 21-10) to the congregation of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church and these were answered in the affirmative by members holding up their right hands. The Candidate/Minister then kneeled and was set apart to the holy office of the Gospel Ministry with prayer and the laying on of hands. He then rose and the Members of the Commission gave him the right hand of fellowship. The Chairman then declared that Mr./TE \_\_\_\_\_ had been regularly elected, (ordained,) and installed as Pastor of the Church, using the words of *BCO* 21-7.

A Charge to the Pastor was delivered by RE/TE \_\_\_\_\_.

A Charge to the Congregation was delivered by RE/TE \_\_\_\_\_.

Following prayer and singing, the new Pastor pronounced the benediction.

The Commission reconvened, approved its Minutes, and was adjourned with prayer by \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Commission

***Please submit the completed report to the Stated Clerk of Presbytery as soon as possible.***

## **CHECKLIST FOR ESTABLISHING A MISSION CHURCH**

### **I Establishing a Mission Church**

- A. Petition to plant a mission church approved by presbytery (BCO 5-2).
- B. Presbytery provides a temporary system of government (BCO 5-3)
- C. Pastoral ministry provided by presbytery (BCO 5-4).
- D. Church members received by temporary government (BCO 5-5, 12-5a & 57)

### **II Steps to Organization of a Mission Church**

- A. Temporary government determines there are men who appear to be qualified to serve as church officers.
- B. Potential church officers are identified, nominated, trained, and examined following the procedures in BCO 24.
- C. Election of Officers (Normally 2 weeks before the organization service.) BCO 5-9d.
- D. Election of a Pastor (See BCO 5-9f)
- E. Presbytery approves the membership petition to organize (BCO 5-9g).
- F. Presbytery appoints an organizing commission and sets the date and time of the organization service (BCO 5-9h).

### **II Organization Service (BCO 5-9i)**

- A. Ordination and Installation of Officers.
- B. Ordination (if necessary) and installation of a Pastor.
- C. Membership Covenant (5-9i.(3))
- D. Declaration of Organization



## SAMPLE BYLAWS (written for Central Georgia Presbytery)

### SECTION I: NAME

The incorporated name of this body shall be "THE CENTRAL GEORGIA PRESBYTERY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA."

### SECTION II: OBJECT

The object of this body is to fulfill the requirements for Presbyteries as set forth in the *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America (13-9). The doctrinal and governmental standards of this Presbytery shall be those stated in the *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America (Preface, III). These Bylaws are not to conflict with the *Book of Church Order*, and in any case of conflict, the standards of the *Book of Church Order* shall take precedence.

### SECTION III: MEMBERS

Members of this Presbytery shall be in two classes: Ordained Ministers of the Word and the particular churches. Standards for examination for membership of both Ministers and churches shall be as set forth in the *Book of Church Order*. Representation of elders from particular churches shall be in accordance with the provisions of the *Book of Church Order*.

### SECTION IV: OFFICERS

All officers shall be elected by majority vote of those present with power to vote at the stated meeting scheduled for that purpose. The various offices of the Presbytery, and their functions, are as follows:

#### A. MODERATOR

1. **Eligibility.** The Moderator shall be a Minister who is a member in good standing of the Presbytery, or an elder in good standing of a member church of the Presbytery. The elder does not have to be currently active on the Session of his church if that church follows a rotation system for its Session. A moderator may not succeed himself, nor serve a second term in office within one year of previously having served.
2. **Tenure.** The Moderator will be elected at each Stated Meeting of Presbytery, and will continue to serve in office until a successor is elected at a following Stated Meeting. He will preside over called or other special meetings, and otherwise function as Moderator during his tenure.
3. **Moderator-in-Nomination.** At each Stated Meeting of Presbytery, a Moderator-in-Nomination will be elected, with the understanding that his name will automatically be placed in nomination for the office of moderator at the next Stated Meeting. This policy is established to enable men to prepare themselves to function in this office to the best of their ability, and to be aware of current issues before the court. However, election as Moderator-in-Nomination does not require the Presbytery to elect this nominee at its next Stated Meeting, at which time a normal process of nominations and elections will be followed.
4. **Duties.** The Moderator of Presbytery will function as chairman of all meetings of Presbytery, following approved parliamentary procedure. If no worship service has been held prior to the meeting of Presbytery, the retiring Moderator shall ordinarily bring a message from God's Word in an appropriate time of devotion. Between meetings, the Moderator does not have the authority to speak for the Presbytery but should be consulted in all matters affecting the Presbytery as a whole.

#### B. STATED CLERK

1. **Eligibility.** The Stated Clerk shall be a Minister who is a member in good standing of the Presbytery, or an elder in good standing of a member church of the Presbytery. The elder does not have to be currently active on the Session of his church if that church follows a rotation system for its Session.

2. **Tenure.** The Stated Clerk will be elected at the Summer Stated Meeting and shall serve for a period of three years. He may succeed himself as often as the Presbytery so desires, and it is deemed advisable that this be done whenever possible.
3. **Duties.** The Stated Clerk shall perform the duties assigned by the *Book of Church Order*, following guidelines set forth by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. He shall perform other duties as assigned by the Presbytery. In the administration of his duties, the Stated Clerk shall be under the supervision of the Permanent Committee on Administration. His duties will include, but not be limited to the following: keeping proper minutes of all Presbytery and Commission meetings, giving certified extracts therefrom when required; assemble the items of business to come before the Presbytery and refer each item to the proper committee; (if the clerk has questions regarding reference, he is to consult with the Committee on Administration before making reference); send to each member and church (including men under care) notice of all meetings; note the attendance at each meeting and make recommendations concerning absences at Stated Meetings; maintain permanent, orderly records of all Presbytery correspondence and other matters; notify each Committee and Commission chairman of his appointment, membership and business before it; maintain a supply of necessary forms for use by churches; make all communications authorized by Presbytery; prepare and transmit all reports, overtures, bills, etc. required by or forwarded to the General Assembly; open meetings of Presbytery when the Moderator is unable to do so, and serve until a new Moderator is elected. The Presbytery shall provide or reimburse the Stated Clerk for all costs required by the duties of his office upon presentation of proper cost statements subject to the limitations of the current approved budget.
4. **Assistant Clerks and Office Staff.** When necessary to the performance of his duties, and upon recommendation by the Committee on Administration, the Presbytery may elect other members of the body to serve as Assistant Clerks and may authorize the hiring of clerical help and services (such as printing and duplication) to assist the Stated Clerk in carrying out the duties of his office.

C. TREASURER:

1. **Eligibility:** Eligibility for the office of Treasurer shall be the same as for the office of Stated Clerk. The Stated Clerk may also serve as Treasurer.
2. **Tenure.** Tenure for the office of Treasurer shall be the same as for the office of Stated Clerk.
3. **Duties.** The Treasurer shall perform those duties required of him by the *Book of Church Order* and those other duties as may be assigned by the Presbytery. In the performance of his duties, the Treasurer shall come under the oversight of the Committee on Administration. His duties shall include but not be limited to: custody of the funds and securities belonging to the Presbytery, and not otherwise designated; receive, deposit, and disburse such funds as directed by the Presbytery; keep an accurate account of the finances of the Presbytery, not only of those funds in the custody, but also by means of quarterly reports from other committees handling separate funds; prepare or have prepared quarterly reports of the financial condition of the Presbytery; in general, perform all of the duties incident to the office of Treasurer. He shall be bonded in an amount to be determined by the Presbytery. The Presbytery shall provide or reimburse the Treasurer for all costs required by the duties of his office upon presentation of proper cost statements subject to the limitations of the current approved budget.

D. TRUSTEES:

1. **Eligibility.** The Board of Trustees of the Presbytery shall consist of the Stated Clerk, the Chairman of the Six Permanent Committees of the Presbytery, plus two other members of Presbytery elected at large. Eligibility for this office shall be the same as for all other offices.
2. **Tenure.** Trustees will serve for the period of their Committee Chairmanship, or three years, whichever is shorter. Trustees may be re-elected to office upon 2/3 vote of members present at time of voting. Election will be held at Summer Stated Meeting.
3. **Duties.** The Trustees shall receive and hold for use of Presbytery all real and personal property, grants, endowments, and such other funds acquired, devised, purchased, or donated,

not otherwise disposed of. They shall be the legal Officers of the Corporation. As long as the Presbytery is incorporated under the laws of the State of Georgia, five of the Trustees must be residents of that State.

#### SECTION V. MEETINGS:

1. **Stated Meetings.** The time and place of each Stated Meeting shall be determined by Presbytery at the preceding Stated Meeting, or, should Presbytery fail to make this decision, by the Moderator, with approval of the Committee on Administration. The normal times of Stated Meetings shall be as follows:

WINTER STATED MEETING: 9 a.m., Third Saturday in January

SPRING STATED MEETING: 10 a.m., Second Tuesday in April

SUMMER STATED MEETING: 9 a.m., Third Saturday in July

FALL STATED MEETING: 10 a.m., Second Tuesday in October

Whenever possible, the Winter and Summer Stated meetings will be preceded by Presbytery-wide worship services including celebration of the Lord's Supper at the host church or some other practical location the night before the meeting.

2. **Called Meeting.** Called meetings will only be held in cases of extreme emergency. Such meetings will be called in strict accordance with the *Book of Church Order*.
3. **Quorum.** A quorum for all meetings, whether Stated or Called will be no less than four Teaching Elders and four Ruling Elders. At any time that attendance at a meeting should fall below the level required for a quorum, the only business which may be conducted is a motion to adjourn the meeting.
4. **Docket.** The normal docket for stated Meetings shall be as follows:
  - a. Period of worship and/or prayer
  - b. Roll call and letters of excuse
  - c. Introduction and seating of corresponding members and visiting brethren
  - d. Representative of the Host Church
  - e. Minutes of previous meetings
  - f. Election of Moderator
  - g. Election of other officers (when necessary)
  - h. Election of Moderator-in-Nomination
  - i. Adoption of the Docket
  - j. Reading and assignment of communications
  - k. Appointment of Standing Committees
  - l. Appointment of Commissions and/or Ad Interim Committees
  - m. Reports of Permanent Committees, with the report of Candidates and Credentials Committee always being first, the other five permanent Committees rotating their order of report from meeting to meeting.
  - n. Unfinished (old) business
  - o. Reports from Standing Committees
  - p. Reports from officers (Clerk, Treasurer, Trustees)
  - q. New Business
  - r. Time and place of next Stated Meeting
  - s. Adjournment with prayer

Only those items of business which reach the hands of the Stated Clerk no later than **14 days prior** to a Stated Meeting may be included in the docket any place other than New Business. This includes reports of Permanent Committees.

#### SECTION VI. PERMANENT COMMITTEES:

1. **Membership on Committees.** Eligibility for membership on Permanent Committees of the Presbytery will be the same as for officers of the Presbytery. No man may serve as chairman of more than one permanent committee at any given time. No man may serve as chairman of more than two sub-committees or combination of committee/subcommittee at any given time.

2. **Election and Tenure.** Elections for Chairman of Committees and Subcommittees shall normally be held at the Summer Stated Meeting. Terms will be for one year. A man may serve as Chairman of a Committee or Subcommittee for three consecutive years. If nominated to continue on the same Committee/Subcommittee after three years, a 2/3 vote of the members present at time of election is required.
3. **Committee Structure.** Each Permanent Committee will be made up of its chairman, and the chairman of each of the assigned Subcommittees serving as members of the main committee. Membership on Subcommittees does not need the approval of the Presbytery as a whole, but will be left to the nomination of the Chairman of the appropriate Subcommittee, with approval of the entire Committee. Membership on Subcommittees may vary at any time according to current needs, with the only restriction being that the same man may not serve more than three continuous years on any given Subcommittee, without approval of 2/3 of the Presbytery present and voting at the time nominated to so continue.
  - a. **Committee on Administration.** This Committee shall handle all matters which do not normally fall under the oversight of any other Permanent Committee, and will include, but not be limited to, such things as: oversight of the work of the Stated Clerk and Treasurer; inter-church relations; judicial business; insurance and annuities; publicity and general information concerning the work of the Presbytery; nominations; stewardship and budget matters. The regular Subcommittees of the Committee shall be as follows:
    - 1) Subcommittee on Insurance and Annuities
    - 2) Subcommittee on Information and Nominations
    - 3) Subcommittee on Stewardship and Budget
    - 4) Subcommittee on Judicial Business

The Committee on Administration through its Subcommittee on Stewardship and Budget shall present to Presbytery at each Fall Stated meeting a proposed budget for the following calendar year for formal adoption by the Presbytery.

The budget may be amended after formal adoption by the Presbytery but as a condition precedent to such amendment, a committee must submit the proposed amendment to the Chairman of the Committee on Administration at least 28 calendar days prior to the time fixed for a Stated Meeting for necessary committee action. A written report outlining the proposed amendment and including said concurrence or non-concurrence of the Committee on Administration shall be submitted by the proposing committee to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery at least 14 days before the time fixed for such Stated Meeting in order that the written report and recommendation may be included in the docket for action by the Presbytery.
  - b. **Committee on Christian Education.** This Committee shall handle all matters which concern the internal training and education of the members of Presbytery, both Ministers of the Word and Churches. It shall include, but not be limited to, such things as: Men's Work; Women's Work; Youth Work; Camps; Conferences; Leadership Training; Church Schools; University and Seminary training (including any Extension Seminaries within the bounds of the Presbytery); and any other educational programs. The regular Subcommittees of the Committee shall be as follows:
    - 1) Subcommittee on Men's Work
    - 2) Subcommittee on Women's Work
    - 3) Subcommittee on Youth Work and Camps
    - 4) Subcommittee on Conferences and Programs
  - c. **Committee on Mission to North America.** This Committee shall handle all matters involving church planting and growth within the bounds of the Presbytery, both for particular churches, newly planted churches, and separate missions dealing with residents of the area. It shall include, but not be limited to, such things as: calling evangelistic/organizing pastors to develop new churches; providing aid and assistance to established particular churches having need; develop and coordinate programs for use by the Church in the areas of Evangelism and Church Growth; provide mission work to such areas as inner-cities; minorities; rural areas, and such other areas and groups which would not normally support a particular church. The regular Subcommittees of the Committee shall be as follows:

- 1) Subcommittee on New Church Development
  - 2) Subcommittee on Aid to Established Churches
  - 3) Subcommittee on Evangelism and Church Growth
  - 4) Subcommittee on Non-Self Supporting Missions
- d. **Committee on Mission to the World.** This Committee shall handle all matters pertaining to information and programs involving the sending of missionary personnel from within the bounds of Presbytery to serve outside the United States and the promoting of the program of the Assembly's Mission to the World within the Presbytery. In addition, this Committee shall provide oversight for the ministry of the International Seaman's House in Savannah. The regular Subcommittee of the Committee shall be as follows:
- 1) Subcommittee on Recruiting and Support
  - 2) Subcommittee on Information and Programs
  - 3) Subcommittee on International Seaman's House, Savannah
- e. **Committee on Candidates and Credentials.** This Committee shall handle all matters pertaining to the care of candidates for the ministry, theological examination of men applying for ordination to the Gospel Ministry; theological examination of previously examined ministers transferring into the Presbytery; examination of calls issued to ministers within the Presbytery; and other such matters as may involve the credentials of members of Presbytery. The regular Subcommittees of the Committee shall be as follows:
- 1) Subcommittee on Men Under Care (including Licentiates)
  - 2) Subcommittee on Theological Examination
  - 3) Subcommittee on Credentials
- f. **Shepherding Committee.** The Shepherding Committee shall be composed of three Ruling Elders and three Teaching Elders. The Stated Clerk shall serve as advisory member. This committee shall meet as often as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities and its duties shall be:
- 1) To advise and communicate with teaching elders in their relation to sessions and congregations they serve.
  - 2) To counsel with sessions of churches without pastors and to offer assistance in securing pastors only at the request of the session or local nominating committee.
  - 3) To advise with ministers without pastoral charges and to offer assistance in securing pastoral charges for them.
  - 4) To offer general oversight of ministers without charge and/or laboring outside the bounds of Presbytery.
  - 5) To act as a commission only to dissolve pastoral relations when both parties concur in the request and in such instances to grant transfer of membership to other Presbyteries.
  - 6) To counsel with Sessions at their request in such matters as are presented by them.
  - 7) To perform other duties which Presbytery shall deem wise.
  - 8) To report to Presbytery whenever necessary or when requested by Presbytery.

## SECTION VII: STANDING COMMITTEES

The following Standing (temporary) Committees shall be appointed by the Moderator for each separate meeting of Presbytery, when required:

- A. **Program Committee:** This Committee shall consist of the Moderator, Moderator-in-Nomination; Stated Clerk; and two representatives of the Host Church. This Committee shall meet in advance of the Presbytery and prepare the proposed docket and handle any logistic planning required for the meeting.
- B. **Bills and Overtures Committee:** This Committee shall consist of two teaching elders and two ruling elders, with power to vote at a given meeting of Presbytery, none of whom may also be serving at that time as an officer of Presbytery (other than Trustee), or the Chairman of a Permanent Committee. This Committee will handle and report back all matters assigned to it by the Presbytery for that meeting only.
- C. **Sessional Records Committee:** This Committee shall consist of two teaching elders and two ruling elders, with power to vote at a given meeting of Presbytery, none of whom may also be serving at

that time as an officer of Presbytery (other than Trustee) or the Chairman of a Permanent Committee. This Committee will handle examination of all Sessional Records brought to a given Presbytery meeting and report back for that meeting only.

- D. **Resolutions:** This Committee shall consist of two Teaching Elders and two Ruling Elders, with power to vote at a given meeting of Presbytery, none of whom may also be serving at that time as an officer of Presbytery (other than Trustee) or the Chairman of a Permanent Committee. This Committee will handle the drafting of any resolutions that may be appropriate for that given meeting, including resolutions of thanks and any other such resolutions on which the Presbytery desires to speak.

#### SECTION VIII: AD-INTERIM COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

The Presbytery may establish Ad-Interim Committees and Commissions to deal with matters before it at any time, with the following limitations:

- A. Each Ad-Interim Committee or Commission will consist of a quorum of a minimum of two Teaching Elders and two Ruling Elders, with any larger number always being an equal number of each.
- B. No Ad-Interim Committee or Commission may continue past the next Stated Meeting of Presbytery unless authorized to do so by a majority vote of Presbytery.
- C. No Ad-Interim Committee or Commission may continue more than 6 months in any case.
- D. Each Ad-Interim Committee will be appointed by the Moderator. Each Commission shall be elected by Presbytery.

#### SECTION IX: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

All parliamentary procedures must be in accordance with the *Book of Church Order* and the most recent edition of Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised. The Moderator may appoint a member of Presbytery to assist him in these matters, who will serve as Parliamentarian only for the term of the actual meeting.

#### SECTION X: SUSPENSION AND AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

These Bylaws may be temporarily suspended, amended or revised at any Stated Meeting of Presbytery by a 2/3 vote of those present and voting, unless such suspension, amendment, or revision would violate any part of the *Book of Church Order*. Any permanent amendment, revision, or repeal of the Bylaws must be proposed IN WRITING at a Stated Meeting, approved by a 2/3 vote of that Stated Meeting, and ratified by a 2/3 vote of the following Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

## SAMPLE PRESBYTERY STANDING RULES

### STANDING RULES OF COVENANT PRESBYTERY

02/06/01

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- 1. Name
  - 2. Relationship of Covenant Presbytery to its Constituting Churches
  - 3. Meetings
    - 3-1. Stated Meetings
    - 3-2. Adjourned Meetings
    - 3-3. Called Meetings
    - 3-4. Attendance
  - 4. Officers
    - 4-1. Moderator and Vice-Moderator
    - 4-2. Stated Clerk
    - 4-3. Recording Clerk
    - 4-4. Treasurer
    - 4-5. Parliamentarian
    - 4-6. Trustees
  - 5. Committees and Commissions
    - 5-1. Standing Committees
    - 5-2. Permanent Committees
    - 5-3. Nominating Committee
    - 5-4. Church Care Committee and Sessional Records
    - 5-5. Commissions
  - 6. Government
    - 6-1. Rules of Order
    - 6-2. Standing Rules of Presbytery
  - 7. General Policies
    - 7-1. Expenses
    - 7-2. Obligations of Teaching Elders
  - Appendix - Powers of Commission Entrusted and Guidance Given to Committees
  - Appendix - Presbytery Policy on Distribution of Minutes
  - Appendix - Presbytery Policy on Distribution of Scholarship Fund
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#### 1. Name

Covenant is the name of the presbytery in the Presbyterian Church in America whose constituting churches are in south and east Arkansas, west Tennessee, and north Mississippi.

#### 2. Relationship of Covenant Presbytery to its Constituting Churches

2-1. Covenant Presbytery is composed of all teaching elders and congregations within its geographical bounds that have been accepted by the presbytery, together with the mission churches for which it has the responsibility of initiation and oversight.

2-2. Any congregation in the geographical bounds of Covenant Presbytery may ask for admission into the presbytery, upon which request the presbytery shall select a commission for the enablement of admission, according to **BCO** 13-8.

2-3. New churches are necessarily organized by the presbytery.

2-4. The jurisdiction of the individual congregation is in its session, and, if it has no session, is in the presbytery.

2-5. Since membership in the presbytery is voluntary, congregations may remove themselves from the relationship to Covenant Presbytery when they so desire.

2-6. Properties are owned by the individual congregations, not by or with any higher court.

2-7. Covenant Presbytery is responsible for the oversight of individual member congregations, and exercises this responsibility chiefly through the examination of session records each year.

2-8. Covenant Presbytery budgets money for its various operations of service, and asks the local congregations to make contributions for that service, sending, if possible, at the beginning of each year, quarter or month, as it is necessary for the payment of presbytery expenses.

### **3. Meetings**

#### **3-1. Stated Meetings**

3-1.a. Presbytery shall hold (3) three Stated Meetings a year, on the first Tuesday in February and October, and the fourth Tuesday in May at 9:30 a.m. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at the February and October meetings. The place of each meeting shall be determined at the previous meeting. The Presbytery may approve and announce special observances, memorial services and other particular forms of worship agreeable to the word of God and unto His glory.

3-1.b. A proposed docket shall be prepared by the Stated Clerk for each meeting of Presbytery in consultation with the Moderator, Chairmen of the Permanent Committees and the Administration Committee, and a copy suitable for reproduction of all communications and reports from individuals, committees, and Church courts which require action by the Presbytery shall be received by the Stated Clerk three (3) weeks prior to the Stated Meetings of Presbytery. The Stated Clerk shall send one (1) copy of the above and the docket to each Teaching Elder and church on the rolls of Presbytery, or more if requested, ten (10) days prior to the Stated Meetings of Presbytery. Requests for special speakers or presentations from outside Presbytery shall be referred to the appropriate Permanent Committee and approved by that Committee before being admitted to the docket. Presbytery shall adopt the docket by a majority vote, and the body may amend the docket at any time during the meeting by a majority vote.

#### **3-2. Adjourned Meetings**

Adjourned Meetings may be held as determined necessary by Presbytery for continuing the business of regular Stated Meetings.

#### **3-3. Called Meetings**

All called meetings of Covenant Presbytery shall meet the requirements of the Book of Church Order 13-12. In addition, there shall be no called meetings of Presbytery without either (a) the approval of one-fourth (1/4) of the Sessions of Covenant Presbytery, or (b) the unanimous vote of all members present at a properly called meeting of a committee or commission of Covenant Presbytery to have a called meeting of Presbytery, or (c) the majority vote of the commissioners present at a stated or called meeting of Covenant Presbytery to have a called meeting of Presbytery.



### **3-4. Attendance**

Unless honorably retired, declared infirm, or permitted to labor outside the geographical bounds of Presbytery, all Teaching Elders are expected to attend all meetings of Presbytery. Permission for absences shall be requested through the Stated Clerk or from the floor during the Stated Clerk's report.

## **4. Officers**

### **4-1. Moderator and Vice-Moderator**

4-1.a. The Moderator and the Vice-Moderator shall be elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee for a term of one (1) year, subject to re-election at the will of Presbytery. Election shall normally be held at the October Stated Meeting, with term of office to begin on January 1st the following.

4-1.b. In odd numbered years, the Moderator will be a Teaching Elder and the Vice-Moderator, a Ruling Elder; in even numbered years, the Moderator will be a Ruling Elder and the Vice-Moderator, a Teaching Elder.

4-1.c. The Moderator shall preside over all Meetings of Presbytery. In the event of the Moderator's absence, the Vice-Moderator shall preside over the Meeting as the acting Moderator. If both Moderator and Vice-Moderator are absent, the last Moderator present or the last Vice-Moderator present or the Teaching Elder longest-a-member-of-the-court may hold the chair until a new Moderator is elected.

4-1.d. The Moderator has all the authority necessary for the preservation of order, for the proper and expeditious conduct of all business before the court according to the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America and Robert's Rules of Order.

4-1.e. In any emergency the Moderator may, by circular letter or telephone notification, change the time or place (or both) of meetings to which the court stands adjourned, giving reasonable notice of such change.

4-1.f. The Moderator shall appoint the members of Standing Committees and their chairmen.

4-1.g. The Moderator shall have the responsibility for the opening worship at each Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

4-1.h. The Moderator is responsible for appointing a time keeper. Debate on a main motion shall be limited to twenty (20) minutes unless extended. In the first twenty minutes of debate on the main motion, each speaker shall be limited to a maximum of five (5) minutes. In the event Presbytery wishes to extend the debate, each speaker shall be limited to three (3) minutes. Time extension shall be approved by a simple majority of Presbytery and shall be in increments of six (6) minutes.

4-1.i. The Moderator and the Vice-Moderator, by the authority vested in them, are ex-officio members of the Administration Committee.

### **4-2. Stated Clerk**

4-2.a. The Stated Clerk shall be elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee for a term of one (1) year, subject to re-election at the will of Presbytery. Election shall normally be held at the October Stated Meeting, with term of office to begin on January 1st the following.

4-2.b. The Stated Clerk shall receive an annual stipend to be fixed by Presbytery.

4-2.c. He shall nominate to Presbytery Temporary Clerks, who, upon election, shall serve under the direction of the Stated Clerk.

4-2.d. He shall refer communications to appropriate committees when practicable, and present to Presbytery all other communications intended for that body.

4-2.e. He shall promptly communicate all special orders of Presbytery.

4-2.f. He shall sign and issue promptly all official papers of Presbytery not otherwise provided for, and he shall conduct the official correspondence of the Presbytery.

4-2.g. He shall have the Minutes, proceedings, and reports as adopted by Presbytery reproduced and distributed following each meeting and shall preserve carefully the official copy of the permanent Minutes.

4-2.h. In order for the Stated Clerk to properly edit the minutes submitted by the Recording Clerk, the Presbytery shall furnish and maintain adequate recording equipment to make an electronic record of each meeting.

4-2.i. He shall receive invitations from churches desiring to host Presbytery Meetings and report these to Presbytery.

4-2.j. He shall keep a file of annual statistical reports received from churches of Presbytery for five (5) years.

4-2.k. He shall keep an accurate roll of the churches, Clerks of Sessions, and Teaching Elders of Covenant Presbytery.

4-2.l. He shall advise the Moderator in every possible way, by keeping him informed of matters requiring his attention, giving notice for him of Called Meetings of Presbytery or changes in time and place of Meetings, making the facilities of the office available to him for correspondence or other matters, and rendering any service requested by the Moderator in connection with the operation of Presbytery.

4-2.m. He shall plan and compile the docket for each Meeting of Presbytery in consultation with the Moderator, the chairmen of Permanent Committees, and the Administration Committee. Requests for special speakers or presentations from outside Presbytery shall be referred to the appropriate Permanent Committee and approved by that Committee before being added to the docket.

4-2.n. The Stated Clerk shall send one (1) copy of all committee reports which require action by Presbytery and the docket to each Teaching Elder and church on the rolls of Presbytery, or more if requested, ten (10) days prior to the Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

4-2.o. He shall keep a historical record of Presbytery from year to year and shall preserve all such records.

4-2.p. He shall notify in writing within fifteen (15) days after the Meeting of Presbytery each member who has been elected or appointed to a Committee of Presbytery. It shall be the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to provide the Stated Clerk with accurate names and addresses of the persons elected by Presbytery to membership on any Committee of Presbytery.

4-2.q. He shall prepare a suggested operating budget for the operation of his office, to be presented to the Administration Committee at its meeting prior to the October Meeting of Presbytery.

4-2.r. He shall be an ex-officio member of Presbytery's Administration Committee.

4-2.s. In consultation with the Church Care Committee, he shall, prior to each of the three Stated Meetings of Presbytery, include in the docket a list of the churches whose Sessional Records are scheduled for examination. Two months prior to each Stated Meeting, he is to remind each church Session whose records are due for examination that they need to mail a copy of their unexamined records to the Chairman of the Church Care Committee no later than six weeks prior to the upcoming Stated Meeting.

4-2.t. He shall send out a directory by February 1 of each year and it shall contain:

4-2.t.1. The names, addresses and telephone numbers of the Stated Clerk, the Recording Clerk, the Presbytery Treasurer, and the Editor of the Covenant Presbytery newsletter or newspaper, when one is being published.

4-2.t.2. The names, addresses and telephone numbers of each of the members of the permanent Committees of Presbytery, namely, Administration, Candidates, Christian Education, Church Care, Credentials, Mission to North America, Mission to the World, and Nominating. The members of each Committee shall be listed by classes and the chairman of each noted.

### **4-3. Recording Clerk**

4-3.a. The Recording Clerk shall be elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee for a term of one (1) year, subject to re-election at the will of Presbytery. Election shall normally be held at the October Stated Meeting, with term of office to begin on January 1st following.

4-3.b. The Recording Clerk shall receive an annual stipend to be fixed by Presbytery.

4-3.c. He shall be given two (2) copies of all committee reports as presented to Presbytery for inclusion in the Minutes and a written copy of all motions adopted by Presbytery.

4-3.d. As soon as practicable, he shall convey the Minutes in type written form (or any other form acceptable to the Stated Clerk), properly recorded, to the Stated Clerk for editing and publishing.

### **4-4. Treasurer**

4-4.a. The Presbytery Treasurer shall be elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee for a term of one (1) year, subject to re-election at the will of Presbytery. Election shall normally be held at the October Stated Meeting with the term of office to begin January 1st following.

4-4.b. The Treasurer shall receive an annual stipend fixed by Presbytery.

4-4.c. He shall receive and record all funds contributed to Presbytery, shall discharge all designated funds as directed, and shall disburse all undesignated funds under the guidelines of Presbytery. All disbursements shall be approved by the respective Committees of Presbytery.

4-4.d. He shall give an accounting of the funds to the Presbytery at each Stated Meeting.

4-4.e. He shall be an ex-officio member of the Administration Committee.

### **4-5. Parliamentarian**

4-5.a. The Parliamentarian shall be elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee for a term of one (1) year, subject to re-election at the will of Presbytery. Election shall normally be held at the October Stated Meeting, with term of office to begin January 1st following.

4-5.b. He shall advise the Moderator and Presbytery concerning the alternatives of parliamentary order available to the court as to be expeditious in the dispatch of all business before the court while being in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

4-5.c. He shall advise the Recording and Stated Clerks as to the appropriate wording so the Minutes of Presbytery accurately reflect the actions of the court while being in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

### **4-6. Trustees**

4-6.a. The Trustees of Presbytery shall be composed of six (6) members, with parity of Teaching and Ruling Elders or Deacons. Members shall be elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee, for a term of three (3) years, subject to re-election at the will of Presbytery. Election shall normally be held at the October Stated Meeting with terms of office to begin January 1st following.

4-6.b. They shall hold title in the name of Presbytery to any real property or assets.

4-6.c. They shall administer such property or assets as Presbytery's agents when so directed by Presbytery.

## **5. Committees and Commissions**

### **5-1. Standing Committees**

5-1.a. The Standing Committee shall include Resolution and Thanks. The Moderator shall appoint these Committee(s) at each Meeting of Presbytery from the members present, shall name the chairman of each, and shall name at least two (2) members to the Resolution and Thanks Committee.

### **5-2. Permanent Committees**

5-2.a. The Permanent Committees shall consist of Administration, Christian Education, Candidates, Church Care, Credentials, Mission to North America, and Mission to the World. Each Committee shall be composed of not less than six (6) members with parity of Teaching and Ruling Elders or Deacons, to be divided into three or more classes of equal number. Members shall be elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee and shall not be eligible to be elected to a consecutive term on any given Committee. Members elected to fill unexpired terms shall be eligible to serve one full term additionally. Two alternate members with parity of Teaching and Ruling Elders or Deacons shall be elected annually to each Committee, who shall be required to attend the Committee Meetings and vote in the absence of any principal members. Elections shall normally be held at the October Stated Meeting of Presbytery with terms of office to begin upon election.

5-2.b. The Permanent Committees shall meet as needed in order to fulfill their appointed responsibilities, and the quorum shall be at least one half the number of the principal member positions. Alternates present count toward a quorum. Those members habitually absent shall be reported to Presbytery at the May Stated Meeting.

5-2.c. The Permanent Committees shall elect their own chairmen and other officers from their membership annually. Each Committee is urged to select a chairman, vice-chairman and secretary from different classes.

5-2.d. The Permanent Committees shall report to Presbytery at each Stated Meeting.

5-2.e. The members of Presbytery shall serve on only two (2) Permanent Committees as principals or alternates at the same time including the Nominating Committee.

5-2.f. Committee Reports which require action by Presbytery shall be sent by the chairman or secretary of the Committee to the Stated Clerk at least three (3) weeks prior to the Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

5-2.g. The Chairmen of the Permanent Committees shall submit their proposed committee budgets to the Administration Committee by the September meeting of the Administration Committee for consideration at the October Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

5-2.h. Each Permanent Committee shall operate according to its own Presbytery approved policy manual and changes in the manual will require the adoption of Presbytery. Copies of the manuals shall be sent to the Clerk of Session of each church and to each Teaching Elder in Presbytery and be continually updated with subsequent changes by the mailing of supplements.

5-2.i. The chairman of the Candidates, Christian Education, Church Care, Credentials, Mission to North America, and Mission to the World Committees are ex-officio members of the Administration Committee and particularly when they have significant business to propose to the Administration Committee or to the Presbytery.

5-2.j. At the fall meeting the Administration Committee, with the help of the Treasurer, shall furnish the churches with a per member cost of operating the Presbytery.

5-2.k. Whenever a permanent committee is given a continuing power of a commission, this will be noted in an appendix to the Standing Rules as long as the committee is entrusted with that power.

### **5-3. Nominating Committee**

5-3.a. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of six (6) members with parity of Teaching and Ruling Elders or Deacons, to be divided into two (2) classes of equal number. Members shall be elected by Presbytery at the May Stated Meeting of Presbytery upon nomination from the floor, with terms of office to begin immediately upon election. One Teaching Elder and two Ruling Elders or Deacons shall be elected on odd numbered years, and two Teaching Elders and one Ruling Elder or Deacon shall be elected on even numbered years. The quorum shall be at least one half of the elected members. The Committee shall elect its own chairman and other officers annually.

5-3.b. The Committee shall report to Presbytery at the October Stated Meeting by submitting nominations for all Presbytery committees and other vacancies and shall report at other meetings as vacancies occur.

5-3.c. The Committee shall also make nominations to Presbytery for the appropriate nominations to General Assembly.

5-3.d. The Committee shall submit its nominations to the Stated Clerk three (3) weeks prior to the October Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

### **5-4. Church Care Committee and Sessional Records**

5-4.a. Each church Session, prior to the Stated Meeting assigned to it by the Stated Clerk, is to deliver a copy of its unexamined court records to the Church Care Committee. All efforts should be made to see that no more than one-third (1/3) of the total roll of churches in Presbytery be examined at each Stated Meeting.

5-4.b. Each church Session whose records are scheduled for examination shall mail (or otherwise deliver) a copy of their unexamined records to the Chairman of the Church Care Committee no later than six weeks prior to the upcoming Stated Meeting.

5-4.c. The Church Care Committee shall examine the records in accordance with **BCO** Chapter 40 and shall classify exceptions as notations, exceptions of form or exceptions of substance. The Committee will consult the RAO guidelines on examining Presbytery minutes in defining these terms. Exceptions of substance should be limited to serious irregularities, gross errors, corrupt practices and heretical opinions.

5-4.d. Notations and exceptions of form shall normally be sent to the Clerk of Session by the Committee without being read before Presbytery or recorded in its minutes. Exceptions of substance shall be reported to Presbytery as recommendations to be voted upon. The Sessional Records shall be approved without exception; or with exception of form and/or substance.

5-4.e. Sessions shall advise the Presbytery by the following Stated Meeting through the Church Care Committee that they have disposed of the exception of substance in one of the following manners: the Session agrees with the exception of substance, corrects its record or action if possible, and promises to try to be more careful in the future; or, the Session respectfully disagrees with the exception of substance, states its grounds and refers the exception back to the Presbytery for action. The Church Care Committee will bring a recommendation regarding accepting the disposition as satisfactory.

5-4.f. The Church Care Committee shall report to Presbytery regarding any Sessional Records that have not been submitted for review in the past year.

5-4.g. The Church Care Committee shall provide help for any Clerk of Session seeking guidance in preparing Sessional Records for the yearly Presbytery review.

## **5-5. Commissions**

5-5.a. All commissions appointed by Covenant Presbytery will have a quorum of two Teaching Elders and two Ruling Elders unless otherwise specified by Presbytery.

## **6. Government**

### **6-1. Rules of Order**

The rules of parliamentary order shall be the Standing Rules of Covenant Presbytery here-in-after provided, the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America, and Robert's Rules of Order - Revised.

### **6-2. Standing Rules of Presbytery**

6-2.a. The Standing Rules shall be printed in the minutes of Presbytery once a year. Suspension of the Standing Rules shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Presbytery and shall apply only to a particular action in the same meeting in which suspension takes place.

6-2.b. Amendments to the Standing Rules shall be proposed in writing at one meeting, admitted to the docket of the next Stated Meeting, and become effective by a majority vote of Presbytery.

## **7. General Policies**

### **7-1. Expenses**

7-1.a. Presbytery committee and commission expenses shall be paid by the Treasurer when approved in writing by the chairman of the committee or commission.

7-1.b. Presbytery shall set the rate for automobile travel expense at the October Stated Meeting.

### **7-2. Obligations of Teaching Elders**

#### **MINISTERIAL OBLIGATION**

Believing the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice; and

Sincerely receiving and adopting the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and further promising that if at any time I find myself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, I will on my own initiative, make known to my Presbytery the change which has taken place in my views since the assumption of my ordination vows; and

Approving of the form of government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in America as being in conformity with the general principles of Biblical polity; and

Promising subjection to my brethren in the Lord; and

Having been induced, as far as I know my own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the Gospel of His Son; and

Promising to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto me on that account; and

Engaging to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all my duties as a Christian and a minister of the Gospel, whether personal or relational, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in my manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the flock of which God shall make me overseer;

Therefore I, \_\_\_\_\_, do sincerely receive and subscribe to the above obligation as a just and true exhibition of my faith and principles, and do resolve and promise to exercise my ministry in conformity therewith.

**Appendix - Powers of Commission Entrusted  
and Guidance Given to Committees  
(Taken from Committee Manuals and Presbytery Minutes)  
NOTE: The Appendix is not part of the Standing Rules.**

**1. The Administration Committee**

- DUTIES 6. Presbytery grants the Administration Committee the power of a commission to find a complaint in order and to hear the complaint in accordance with *BCO* 43-8 provided both the party complaining and the party complained against are agreeable to this.

**2. The Church Care Committee**

- III.B.5. Any minister or congregation desiring to dissolve a pastoral relationship shall appear personally (in the case of a minister) or send representatives (in the case of a congregation) before the Committee and then before Presbytery, unless this be waived by the Committee and/or Presbytery. The Committee may act on behalf of Presbytery in dismissing a TE to another presbytery or denomination when both parties to his call concur in the dissolution of an existing relationship.
- III.B.7. The Committee may act on behalf of Presbytery in the dissolution of a pastoral relationship when the church and the pastor concur in their request to Presbytery, and there is a proper call to another church.
- III.B.8. The Committee may act for Presbytery to grant permission to a minister who is a member of Covenant Presbytery, to move to another field within the Presbytery, in the case of a new call, with the understanding that the call must still be approved by Presbytery.

**3. The Credentials Committee**

- III.B.1. Ordained ministers from another PCA Presbytery: They ordinarily may not move on to the field without the permission of Presbytery (*BCO* 21-1). The Committee has the power of a commission to grant exceptions to this rule but only after having examined a man on his views in committee and only by a vote of those present in a properly called committee meeting with a quorum present. Any who move on to the field under this provision must understand that their examination must still be sustained by Presbytery and their call must still be approved by Presbytery.
- III.C.1. Candidates licensed to preach in Covenant Presbytery: The Committee may act as a commission to grant permission to a current licentiate in Covenant Presbytery to move on to the field and to function as a student supply until the next Stated Meeting of Presbytery. The Committee may do this only by a vote of those present in a properly called committee meeting with a quorum present. Any who move on to the field under this provision must understand that their examination must still be sustained by Presbytery and their call must still be approved by Presbytery.
- 91st Stated Meeting (02/06/01); see 91-21 Presbytery adopted the opinion on creation adopted by the 28th General Assembly, as Covenant Presbytery's position on creation, which reads as follows:

"Since historically in Reformed theology there has been a diversity of views of the creation days among highly respected theologians, and, since the PCA has from its inception allowed a diversity, that the Assembly affirm that such diversity as covered in this report [the final report of the General Assembly's Advisory Committee on Creation] is acceptable as long as the full historicity of the creation account is accepted."

**4. The MNA Committee**

- 76th Stated Meeting (02/13/96); see 76-13.5 - 76-13.8. Presbytery set up an MNA church planting fund to receive donations for the purpose of church planting in Covenant Presbytery and allow the MNA Committee to act as a commission, with a required quorum of two

teaching elders and two ruling elders, in managing the fund with oversight by Covenant Presbytery; the presbytery treasurer was given authority to disburse the funds as directed by the commission. The intent is to prevent the "zeroing out" of the funds at the end of the fiscal year designated specifically for church planting as would be done in the case of a normal budgeted item. The establishment of a fund specifically for gifts designated for church planting would mean that this fund would not be treated as a normal budget item so that any monies remaining in the fund at the end of the year would be carried over into the succeeding year.

- 77th Stated Meeting (05/28/96); see 77-25.9. Presbytery approved a policy whereby the MNA Committee yearly brings a recommendation to the February stated meeting of presbytery as to how much of the remaining monies in the church planting account of Covenant Presbytery from the previous fiscal year is to be rolled over to the MNA Church Planting Fund.
- 79th Stated Meeting (02/04/97); see 79-19.5. The committee recommended that Covenant Presbytery answer the Presbytery treasurer's question regarding disbursement of monies in the Presbytery MNA Church Planting Fund by adopting the following interpretation of the language in paragraphs 76-13.5 - 76-13.8 of the Presbytery minutes: The Presbytery treasurer is to disburse funds to each specific project as requested by the commission, and the commission is to present a commission report (BCO 15-1&2) of the disbursement to presbytery for its approval. The recommendation was approved.
- 85th Stated Meeting (02/02/99); see 85-13.2 The Administration Committee will evaluate the carryover funds requests made by the MNA Committee in February of each year using the following guideline in consultation with the presbytery treasurer:

The percentage of the MNA actual church planting expenditures plus carryover request relative to the MNA budget, will not normally exceed the percentage of the overall presbytery budget actually achieved.

Example: If presbytery budget is \$100,000 and actual collection is \$80,000 (80% of budget) this percentage would be applied to the MNA budget. If the MNA budget was \$10,000 and only \$5,000 was spent, then the committee would normally not recommend that the carryover request be in excess of \$3,000, making the expended and carryover funds equal to the percentage of the presbytery budget actually achieved.

- 86th Stated Meeting (05/25/99); see 86-12.2 The motion was made, seconded, and passed that Presbytery instruct its treasurer not to include in his report money that has been put into the MNA Church Planting Fund (as is already done with the money put into Presbytery's Disaster Fund); that once Presbytery, through its MNA commission (see 76-13.6) or by passage of a recommendation or motion, designates Church Planting Fund money to a church planting project, that money is removed from the Church Planting Fund and will be reported on the treasurer's report with the monies designated for that particular project.

## **5. The Nominating Committee**

- III.C. The Presbytery grants to the Nominating Committee the power of a commission to fill any General Assembly Committee of Commissioner Positions not filled after the March Stated Meeting of Presbytery.
- III.D. The Presbytery grants to the Nominating Committee the power of a commission to fill any Presbytery Nominations to the General Assembly Permanent Committees not filled after the October Stated Meeting of Presbytery.



**Appendix - Presbytery Policy  
on the Distribution of Minutes  
See 80-11.3 and 86-12.6.**

**NOTE: The Appendix is not part of the Standing Rules.**

1. The approved minutes of Covenant Presbytery are a public record. A copy will be mailed to anyone who asks for one with the exception of executive session minutes.
2. Executive session minutes will be sent to the GA Committee on Review of Presbytery Records. The minutes of an executive session will be shown or read to any member of presbytery who was present at the executive session and who makes this request of the presbytery stated clerk. Any other request for access to executive session minutes will be referred to the Administration Committee.
3. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly may be included on the mailing list to receive copies of the unapproved minutes to provide him with a timely report of presbytery's actions.
4. Unapproved minutes may be sent to someone such as another stated clerk who is interested only in gleaning ideas on how to publish minutes.
5. Appendices normally will not be mailed out with the minutes. The appendix may include items such as committee reports, treasurer's reports, and details of calls. Details of a call will be sent to anyone in Covenant Presbytery who requests to see them. Requests for the details of a call from anyone outside of Covenant Presbytery will be referred to the Administration Committee.

**Appendix - Presbytery Policy  
on the Distribution of  
Scholarship Fund  
See 86-12.8.**

**NOTE: The Appendix is not part of the Standing Rules.**

The Covenant Presbytery Scholarship Fund is a privately endowed fund for the children of teaching elders of Covenant Presbytery to attend the college of their choice. The award will be for one thousand dollars annually. The Administration Committee recommends the following standard stipulations for the award.

- (1) It will be given in its entirety to one child each year.
- (2) It will be voted upon at the May meeting of the Administration Committee.
- (3) Members of the committee must excuse themselves from evaluating their own children.
- (4) The award will be non repeatable.
- (5) The applicant must have more than \$1000 of unfunded cost in the Fall semester.
- (6) The applicants must fill out a form supplied by the Administration Committee and have it in their hands by April 30 before the Fall of the desired award.
- (7) The applicants who qualify according to #5 and #6 above will be rated by the committee on the basis of the following:
  - (a) Availability for the award (upperclassmen would be favored)
  - (b) Academic achievement in high school and/or thus far in college (qca + act)
  - (c) Need, based on a simple form application

## **RESPONSIBILITY FOR WORSHIP SERVICES AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The 2002 General Assembly took the following action regarding the worship services at the General Assembly:

“That the Administrative Committee through the local Host Committee be responsible for all services at General Assembly (RAO 10-3).”

### Regarding Worship

- See Worship Service Guidelines (attached)
- Select proposed speakers
  - non-PCA speakers must be approved by the Administrative Committee at its October meeting
- Arrange for special music (soloists, instrumentalists, choirs, etc.)
  - Traditionally there is a pre-worship music time (30 minutes) prior to the beginning of the each worship service

This and other responsibilities are further detailed in the Host Committee Manual. If your presbytery has any questions regarding the Host Committee manual or has interest in hosting a General Assembly, please contact the Administrative Committee by phone at 678-825-1000 or by e-mail at [events@pcanet.org](mailto:events@pcanet.org).

## WORSHIP SERVICE GUIDELINES

- Worship services shall be included as approved by the Assembly. The Administrative Committee must approve any non-PCA speaker. (RAO 10-3)
  - Speakers must be compatible with Reformed theology
  - Speakers are expected to respect PCA distinctives in theology, polity and worship
  - Speakers may not use the General Assembly worship services as a platform for promoting their own enterprise
  - For planning purposes, the Speaker must be approved at or before the October AC meeting prior to that General Assembly.
- **Worship is to be conducted within the theological parameters of the *Westminster Standards*** (WCF I.6; XX; XXI; XXVII; XXIX; WLC Qq. 107-100; Qq. 154-196; WSC Qq. 45-56; Qq. 89-93; 96-107).
  - Citations regarding the Sabbath are omitted because the Assembly does not meet on the Lord's Day.
  - Citations regarding baptism are omitted because baptism is not administered at the General Assembly.
- Though only *BCO* Chapters 56, 57, and 58 in our *Directory of Worship* have full constitutional status, **the principles of our Directory of Worship should be honored.**
- **Remember that Reformed worship is** neither Prescribed (with a required detailed liturgy, such as Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, or Lutheran), nor Free-Style (with no binding parameters, such as Quaker, charismatic, or Baptist), but rather **Directed** (bound by biblical and theological principles, yet allowing freedom within those biblical and theological parameters). The biblical-theological parameters are:
  - Reformed worship is **biblical**
    - Obeying and following biblical commands prohibitions, principles
    - Considering biblical precedents
  - Reformed worship is **God-centered**
    - Adoration of God, by the people of God, in accordance with the word of God
    - God is the audience
  - Reformed worship is **participatory**
    - The congregation is to participate in worship. Participation includes: congregational singing, common prayer, corporate confession of faith, responsive readings, unison readings, corporate confession of sin, giving offerings, or receiving communion.
    - Congregation should not merely observe the “worship leaders”
  - Reformed worship is **historically informed**
    - Filter all of Church history through the grid of Scripture
    - Do not dismiss or feel bound by historical worship practices
  - Reformed worship is **culturally appropriate**
    - The first four principles (above) may be legitimately and differently expressed in various cultural settings and at different times
  - *Within our biblical-theological parameters, there is liberty and variety*

- Be considerate of the reality that **there is a spectrum of worship practices in the PCA** within the parameters of our constitution.
- **Avoid unnecessary offense.** Do not push the envelope in either extreme
  - High Church - choral selection sung in Latin, using only fermented wine in communion, or calling the assurance of pardon an “absolution”
  - Too Contemporary - liturgical dance, religious drama, or hard rock music
- **Adhere strictly to the allotted time frame for services. Start on time; end on time!**
  - The Assembly docket all worship services on Wednesday and Thursday, and generously allots 1½ hours (90 minutes) as the not-to-exceed time limit. The Assembly also docket a 30-minute devotional on Friday.
    - It is the General Assembly itself that decides the time allotted for worship services, by adopting its own docket, not the Host Committee
    - *All* who lead in *any* parts of the worship service (prayer, reading scripture, music, preaching, administering communion, etc.) should be aware of the time limitations.
  - Following the worship services:
    - Wednesday - the election of the moderator
    - Thursday - frequently the Assembly reconvenes for business
    - Friday – the Assembly will reconvene for business if needed
    - There is usually a 10-15 minute period of time between the ending of the service and the reconvening of the Assembly.

### The Structure of the Services

An accepted principle of worship is that the structure of the service (order of worship, or shape of the liturgy) should itself be a proclamation or re-presentation of the Gospel.

In his “Gospel Worship Seminar,” Bryan Chapell cites a common flow, looking across the historic structures in Western Christianity:

- Recognition of God’s character
- Confession of our character
- Affirmation of God’s grace
- Instruction for personal transformation
- Responding in Covenant faithfulness

In his worship course at Reformed Theological Seminary, L. Roy Taylor advocated a similar flow:

- God’s Glory – Adoration
- Our Guilt
- God’s Grace - Combining the affirmation of God’s grace and biblical instruction for personal transformation
- Our Gratitude

The various components of the service may then be included in an order of worship that represents the Gospel. For example:

- God's Glory - Adoration
  - Call to worship
  - Doxology, Psalms, Hymns or spiritual Songs of Adoration
  - Prayers of Adoration
  - Scripture readings focusing on God's character
  - Confession of Faith [Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed, biblical confessions of faith such as I Timothy 3:16, Philippians 2:9-11, or *Westminster Standards*]. There are also musical settings of the Apostle's Creed, see new Trinity Hymnal, 741, 742.
- Our Guilt.
  - Corporate confession of sin via adapted scripture readings (ex. Psalm 51, 32, etc.), common prayer of confession read or sung, a litany of confession, Ten Commandments and/or Two Great Commandments read or sung, see new Trinity Hymnal, 724.
  - Individual, silent prayers of confession.
- God's Grace - Combining the affirmation of God's grace and biblical instruction for personal transformation.
  - Assurance of pardon, appropriate passages of scripture read, declaration by minister.
  - Congregational Response – a doxology, Psalms, Hymns or spiritual Songs of thanksgiving, prayers of thanksgiving (extemporaneous, directed, litany, collect, or common prayer).
  - Prayers of supplication (for ourselves) and intercession (for others) [a.k.a. "Pastoral prayer," "the long prayer," "prayers of the people"].
  - Scripture reading(s) - OT & NT (written word of God).
  - Prayer for illumination - understand of Scripture
  - Sermon, (proclaimed word of God), exposition and application of the word of God, biblical instruction for personal transformation
  - Psalms, Hymns or spiritual Songs of response to the word of God.
- Our Gratitude.
  - Giving - tithes, gifts, offerings, alms
  - Offertory
  - Communion - if administered, see details on Communion Service Guidelines
  - Benediction

### **Worship Speaker Deadlines**

- One month prior: **Speaker Release Form** (provided by AC)
  - If the release form is not provided the sermon will not be recorded or webcast
- Three weeks out: **Sermon Title and Scripture Reference**
  - Needed for worship program publication and recording sales preparation

## Music Team Tips

- Coordinate with AC for move-in, rehearsal, and sound checks
- Traditionally there is a pre-worship music time (30 minutes) prior to the beginning of the each worship service
- Provide all riders that include necessary audio-visual equipment – two months prior
- Submit Talent Release Form – one month prior
  - This release form is required for webcast
  - If there is a choir or musical group, one person may complete the release form for the whole group.
- Worship Music – we must abide by all copyright and webcasting regulations.
  - When printing lyrics in the worship bulletins or on PowerPoint slides, please include the PCA General Assembly CCLI number 79205.
  - We must report all song used to CCLI. Please provide:
    - The CCLI song number
    - Song Name
    - Writer or Composer
    - Publishing Company
    - Year the Song was Published
    - Please indicate if the song is public domain
- PowerPoint slides of worship lyrics and sermon notes:
  - The AC will provide the needed technical specs
  - Provide slides at least one month prior to the General Assembly

## FORMAT FOR OVERTURES TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### Submission guidelines:

Please send your overture to [ac@pcanet.org](mailto:ac@pcanet.org). We prefer to receive two files:

- A Word file we use to format for standardizing and Commissioner Handbook needs.
- A signed PDF.

If you prefer to send your signed copy via the mail, please address to:

PCA Office of the Stated Clerk  
1700 North Brown Road  
Suite 105  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043

The due dates for all overtures may be found on the Due Dates page 003 of this Handbook.

### Format template:

**Overture** from the Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_

**Whereas** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_; and

**Whereas** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_; and

**Whereas** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_;

**Therefore be it resolved** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_.

*Adopted by* \_\_\_\_\_ *Presbytery at its stated meeting, (date)* \_\_\_\_\_

*Attested by* TE/RE (Signature) \_\_\_\_\_, *stated clerk*

(Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_

### From *RAO* Article XI on Overtures:

**11-4.** An overture ordinarily is the request of a presbytery for action by the General Assembly upon a specific matter.

**11-5.** Upon receipt the Stated Clerk shall refer all overtures requesting amendment of the *Book of Church Order* or the *Rules of Assembly Operations* to the Committee on Constitutional Business for its advice to the Overtures Committee. Upon receipt, the Stated Clerk shall forward



all overtures concerning presbytery boundaries or a new presbytery to the permanent Committee on Mission to North America. Any overture, other than an overture proposing amendment to the Constitution (which shall be referred to the Committee on Constitutional Business for its advice to the Overtures Committee), having to do with the nature or responsibilities of a permanent Committee or Agency shall be referred by the Clerk to the appropriate permanent Committee or Agency or ad interim committee. All other overtures shall be referred to the Overtures Committee. An overture proposing amendment to the Constitution shall be referred only to the Overtures Committee for consideration and recommendation; such an overture, however, may be referred to other Committees of Commissioners, other permanent Committees or Agencies, or other ad interim committees for advice only, to the Overtures Committee. All overtures shall be published in the *Commissioner Handbook* with reference for consideration indicated.

**11-6.** All overtures requiring references to the Committee on Constitutional Business shall be delivered by at least sixty (60) days prior to the opening of the General Assembly to the Stated Clerk in order to be referred to the committee. No overture requiring reference to the permanent Committee on Constitutional Business received later than sixty (60) days prior to the opening of the General Assembly by the Stated Clerk shall be referred or considered by the General Assembly convening in that year.

**11-7.** All other overtures shall be delivered to the Stated Clerk at least ninety (90) days prior to the opening of the General Assembly in order to be included in the *Commissioner Handbook* for the next meeting of the General Assembly.

**11-8.** Overtures received after the *Commissioner Handbook* is published, and at least one (1) month (31 days) prior to the opening of the General Assembly shall be reported to the Assembly by the Stated Clerk, together with reference.

**11-9.** No overtures received by the Stated Clerk less than one month prior to the opening of the meeting of the General Assembly shall be referred to or considered by the General Assembly convening in that year. An overture proposed by a commissioner to the General Assembly during its proceedings shall be treated as new business (cf. 13-1, 13-2).

**11-10.** No overture will be considered by the General Assembly until it first has been presented to a presbytery. If approved by the presbytery, it will come before the Assembly as the overture of that court. An overture requested by an individual communicant, a teaching elder, or a session, but rejected by the presbytery, may be presented to the Assembly, provided the fact that it was rejected by the presbytery is clearly stated with the overture.

**11-11.** All communications or overtures which propose or request that General Assembly appoint a study committee for any purpose shall contain as a part of the request or proposal a statement of the maximum amount to be budgeted for the study committee (see 9-2).

**11-12.** No communication or overture shall be received that seeks to memorialize someone.

**2022-2023**  
**BCO AMENDMENTS SENT DOWN TO PRESBYTERIES**  
**BY THE 49th GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**FOR VOTING, and for ADVICE AND CONSENT**

**NOTE: The Stated Clerk's Office sends the proposed amendments only in their final form, as approved by the General Assembly.**

**ITEM 1: Amend BCO 7** to disqualify from office men describing themselves as homosexual. [Overture 15 was answered in the affirmative as amended.]

The proposed new paragraph BCO 7-4 would read as follows:

***BCO 7.***

**4.** Men who describe themselves as homosexual, even those who describe themselves as homosexual and claim to practice celibacy by refraining from homosexual conduct, are disqualified from holding office in the Presbyterian Church in America.

**ITEM 2: Amend BCO 8** by the addition of a new paragraph, 8-8, adding chaplain endorsement requirements and recommendations; and **renumber** the following paragraphs accordingly. [Overture 28 was answered in the affirmative as amended.]

**8-8.** A Presbytery may, at its discretion, approve the call of a teaching elder to work as a Chaplain whether military or civilian, with an organization outside the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in America, provided that he be engaged in preaching and teaching the Word, that the Presbytery be assured he will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church, and that he reports at least annually on his work. The Chaplain may be appointed to the work of an evangelist when serving as a Chaplain. Teaching elders ministering as paid or volunteer chaplains are strongly encouraged to seek and obtain their Ecclesiastical Endorsement from the endorsing agency authorized by the General Assembly for such purpose.

**8-89.** As there were in the Church under the law, elders of the people for the government thereof, so in the Gospel Church, Christ has furnished others besides ministers of the Word with gifts and commission to govern when called thereunto, who are called *ruling elders*.

**8-910.** Elders being of one class of office, ruling elders possess the same authority and eligibility to office in the courts of the Church as teaching elders. They should, moreover, cultivate zealously their own aptness to teach the Bible and should improve every opportunity of doing so.

**ITEM 3: Amend *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3** to clarify the role of a Presbytery commission.  
[Overture 25 was answered in the affirmative as amended.]

**15-1.** A commission differs from an ordinary committee in that while a committee is appointed to examine, consider, and report, a commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it, ~~except in the case of judicial commissions of a Presbytery appointed under *BCO* 15-3.~~ A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to the court appointing it. Upon such submission this record shall be entered on the minutes of the court appointing, the date of the submission being the date of “the meeting of the court” for filing requirements under the rules of discipline, with exception of the “notification” dates of *BCO* 42-4 and 43-3, except in the case of a presbytery commission serving as a session or a judicial commission as set forth in *BCO* 15-3. The effective date of dismissal of a commission of Session or Presbytery shall be not before the time allowed for the filing of a complaint or appeal against that commission’s decision has expired. Any complaint or appeal so timely filed, shall be adjudicated by that commission until the matter is settled by the that commission or a higher court. When a commission is appointed to serve as an interim Session, its actions are the actions of a Session, not a Presbytery. Every commission of a Presbytery or Session must submit complete minutes and a report of its activities at least once annually to the court which commissioned it.

**15-3.** Presbytery as a whole may ~~try a judicial case within its jurisdiction (including the right to refer any strictly constitutional issue to a study committee with options listed below),~~ hear a case, with or without process (*BCO* 31-38), a reference (*BCO* 41), an appeal (*BCO* 42), a complaint (*BCO* 43), a *BCO* 40-5 proceeding, or a request to assume original jurisdiction (*BCO* 33-1) properly before it, or it may of its own motion commit any judicial such a case to a commission. Such a commission shall be appointed by the Presbytery from its members other than members of the Session of the church from which the case comes up. The commission shall try the case in the manner presented by the Rules of Discipline and shall submit to the Presbytery a full statement of the case and the judgment rendered. ~~The Presbytery without debate shall approve or disapprove of the judgment, or may refer, (a debatable motion), any strictly constitutional issue(s) to a study committee. In case of referral, the Presbytery shall either dismiss some or all of the specific charges raised in the case or decide the case only after the report of the study committee has been heard and discussed. If Presbytery approves, the~~ The judgment of the commission shall be final and shall be entered on the minutes of Presbytery as the action the decision of the Presbytery, and the statement of the case and judgment printed in its minutes. If Presbytery disapproves, it shall hear the case as a whole, or appoint a new commission to hear the case again.

So that *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 as amended would read:

**15-1.** A commission differs from an ordinary committee in that while a committee is appointed to examine, consider, and report, a commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it. A commission shall keep

a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to the court appointing it. Upon such submission this record shall be entered on the minutes of the court appointing, the date of the submission being the date of “the meeting of the court” for filing requirements under the rules of discipline, with exception of the “notification” dates of *BCO* 42-4 and 43-3. The effective date of dismissal of a commission of Session or Presbytery shall be not before the time allowed for the filing of a complaint or appeal against that commission’s decision has expired. Any complaint or appeal so timely filed, shall be adjudicated by that commission until the matter is settled by that commission or a higher court. When a commission is appointed to serve as an interim Session, its actions are the actions of a Session, not a Presbytery. Every commission of a Presbytery or Session must submit complete minutes and a report of its activities at least once annually to the court which commissioned it.

**15-3.** Presbytery as a whole may hear a case, with or without process (*BCO* 31-38), a reference (*BCO* 41), an appeal (*BCO* 42), a complaint (*BCO* 43), a *BCO* 40-5 proceeding, or a request to assume original jurisdiction (*BCO* 33-1) properly before it, or it may of its own motion commit such a case to a commission. Such a commission shall be appointed by the Presbytery from its members other than members of the Session of the church from which the case comes up. The commission shall try the case in the manner presented by the Rules of Discipline and shall submit to the Presbytery a full statement of the case and the judgment rendered. The judgment of the commission shall be the decision of the Presbytery, and the statement of the case and judgment printed in its minutes.

**ITEM 4: Amend *BCO* 16 by adding 16-4** regarding qualifications for church office.  
[Overture 29 was answered in the affirmative as amended.]

***BCO* 16.**

**4.** Officers in the Presbyterian Church in America must be above reproach in their walk and Christlike in their character. While office bearers will see spiritual perfection only in glory, they will continue in this life to confess and to mortify remaining sins in light of God’s work of progressive sanctification. Therefore, to be qualified for office, they must affirm the sinfulness of fallen desires, the reality and hope of progressive sanctification, and be committed to the pursuit of Spirit-empowered victory over their sinful temptations, inclinations, and actions.

**ITEM 5: Amend BCO 21-4 and 24-1** by adding the following paragraphs regarding requirements for ordination:

- a new sub-paragraph 21-4.e and the re-lettering of subsequent sub-paragraphs 21-4.e-h to 21-4.f-i; and
- a new second paragraph to 24-1.

[Overture 31 was answered in the affirmative as amended.]

**BCO 21.**

**4. Ordination Requirements and Procedures**

- e. In the examination of the candidate's personal character, the presbytery shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The candidate must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, the candidate must exercise great care not to diminish the seriousness of those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in his progress in holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

**Reletter** current paragraphs 21-4.e-h to 21-4.f-i

**BCO 24.**

**1.** Every church shall elect persons to the offices of ruling elder and deacon in the following manner: At such times as determined by the Session, communicant members of the congregation may submit names to the Session, keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be an active male member who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. After the close of the nomination period nominees for the office of ruling elder and/or deacon shall receive instruction in the qualifications and work of the office. Each nominee shall then be examined in:

- a. his Christian experience, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9),
- b. his knowledge of Bible content,
- c. his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* Preface III, *The Constitution Defined*),
- d. the duties of the office to which he has been nominated, and
- e. his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination. (*BCO* 24-6)

In the examination of the nominee's personal character, the Session shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The nominee must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make

progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, the nominee must exercise great care not to diminish the seriousness of those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in his progress in holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

So that *BCO* 21-4.e and 24-1 as amended would read:

**21-4. Ordination Requirements and Procedures**

- e. In the examination of the candidate's personal character, the presbytery shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The candidate must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, the candidate must exercise great care not to diminish the seriousness of those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in his progress in holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

**24-1. (following 24-1.a-e)**

In the examination of the nominee's personal character, the Session shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The nominee must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, the nominee must exercise great care not to diminish the seriousness of those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in his progress in holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

**ITEM 6: Amend *BCO* 31-10 and 33-4 on pre-trial non-disciplinary suspensions.**

[Overture 2021-20 was answered in the affirmative as amended.]

***BCO* 31-10.** When a member of a church court is under process, all his official functions may be suspended at the court's discretion; but this shall never be done in the way of censure, and this requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority.

***BCO* 33-4.** When it is impracticable immediately to commence process against an accused church member, the Session may, if it thinks the edification of the Church requires it, prevent the accused from approaching the Lord's Table until the charges against him can be examined, but this requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority.

**ITEM 7: Amend BCO 33-1 and 34-1**, establishing a percentage threshold for Original Jurisdiction requests. [Overture 8 was answered in the affirmative as amended.]

**33-1.** Process against ~~all a church members, other than ministers of the Gospel,~~ shall be entered before the Session of the church to which such members belongs, ~~except in cases of appeal.~~ However, if the Session does not indict in either doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal and the Session refuses to act in doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal and two other Sessions of at least ten percent (10%) of churches in the same Presbytery request the Presbytery of which the church is a member to initiate proper or appropriate action in a case of process and thus assume original jurisdiction for a case of process (to first receive and initially hear and determine) and authority, the Presbytery shall do so. The Presbytery may assess the costs thereof equitably among the parties, including the petitioning Sessions and the Session of the church member.

**34-1.** Process against a minister shall be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member. However, if the Presbytery does not indict in either doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal and the Presbytery refuses to act in doctrinal cases or cases of public scandal and two other at least ten percent (10%) of Presbyteries request the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction for a case of process (to first receive and initially hear and determine), the General Assembly shall do so. The General Assembly may assess the costs thereof equitably among the parties, including the petitioning Presbyteries and the Presbytery of the minister.

So that BCO 33-1 and 34-1 as amended would read:

**33-1.** Process against a church member shall be entered before the Session of the church to which such member belongs. However, if the Session does not indict in either doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal and the Sessions of at least ten percent (10%) of churches in the same Presbytery request the Presbytery of which the church is a member to assume original jurisdiction for a case of process, the Presbytery shall do so. The Presbytery may assess the costs thereof equitably among the parties, including the petitioning Sessions and the Session of the church member.

**34-1.** Process against a minister shall be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member. However, if the Presbytery does not indict in either doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal and at least ten percent (10%) of Presbyteries request the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction for a case of process, the General Assembly shall do so. The General Assembly may assess the costs thereof equitably among the parties, including the petitioning Presbyteries and the Presbytery of the minister.

**ITEM 8: Amend BCO 35, paragraphs 1-5** to allow victim protection provisions, and renumber paragraphs 6-14 accordingly. [Overture 2021-40 was answered in the affirmative as amended.]

**35-1.** All persons of proper age and intelligence are competent witnesses, except such as do not believe in the existence of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments. ~~The accused party may be allowed, but shall not be compelled to testify; but the accuser shall be required to testify, on the demand of the accused.~~ Either party has the right to challenge a witness whom he believes to be incompetent, and the court shall examine and decide upon his competency. ~~It belongs to the court to judge the degree of credibility to be attached to all evidence.~~

**35-2.** The accused party is allowed, but shall not be compelled, to testify; but the accuser shall be required to testify, on the demand of the accused. A husband or wife shall not be compelled to bear testimony against one another in any court.

**35-3.** A court may, at the request of either party, or at its own initiative, make reasonable accommodation to prevent in-person contact with the accused:

a. The court may have testimony taken by videoconference.

The videoconference shall employ technical means that ensure that all persons participating in the meeting can see and hear each other at the same time, and which allows for live cross-examination by both parties.

b. The court may restrict the accused from appearing on the videoconference screen, and when the accused is represented by counsel (BCO 32-19), cross-examination shall be conducted by that counsel.

c. In all cases where such accommodation has been made, videoconference testimony by witnesses under the age of 18 shall be taken by written interrogatory to be read to the witness by a person appointed by the court in accordance with the applicable provisions of BCO 35-11.

d. The court shall include in the record of the proceedings its reasons for this accommodation and any objection from either party.

**35-34.** The testimony of more than one witness shall be necessary in order to establish any charge; yet if, in addition to the testimony of one witness, corroborative evidence be produced, the offense may be considered to be proved.

**35-5.** ~~Witnesses shall be examined first by the party introducing them; then cross-examined by the opposite party; after which any member of the court, or either party, may put additional interrogatories. No question shall be put or answered except by permission of the moderator, subject to an appeal to the court. The court shall not permit questions frivolous or irrelevant to the charge at issue. It belongs to the court to judge the degree of credibility to be attached to all evidence.~~ [Editorial note: In the current BCO, this sentence is the last sentence in 35-1.]

**35-46.** No witness afterwards to be examined, unless a member of the court, shall be present during the examination of another witness on the same case, if either party object.



**35-57.** Witnesses shall be examined first by the party introducing them; then cross-examined by the opposite party; after which any member of the court, or either party, may put additional interrogatories. No question shall be put or answered except by permission of the moderator, subject to an appeal to the court. The court shall not permit questions frivolous or irrelevant to the charge at issue. **[Editorial note: In the current BCO, this paragraph is 35-5 – no change in wording.]**

**Renumber current BCO 35-6 through BCO 35-14 to read 35-8 through 35-15.**

**So that BCO 35-1 through 35-6 would read:**

**35-1.** All persons of proper age and intelligence are competent witnesses, except such as do not believe in the existence of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments. Either party has the right to challenge a witness whom he believes to be incompetent, and the court shall examine and decide upon his competency.

**35-2.** The accused party is allowed, but shall not be compelled, to testify; but the accuser shall be required to testify, on the demand of the accused. A husband or wife shall not be compelled to bear testimony against one another in any court.

**35-3.** A court may, at the request of either party, or at its own initiative, make reasonable accommodation to prevent in-person contact with the accused:

- a. The court may have testimony taken by videoconference. The videoconference shall employ technical means that ensure that all persons participating in the meeting can see and hear each other at the same time, and which allows for live cross-examination by both parties.
- b. The court may restrict the accused from appearing on the videoconference screen, and when the accused is represented by counsel (BCO 32-19), cross-examination shall be conducted by that counsel.
- c. In all cases where such accommodation has been made, videoconference testimony by witnesses under the age of 18 shall be taken by written interrogatory to be read to the witness by a person appointed by the court in accordance with the applicable provisions of BCO 35-11.
- d. The court shall include in the record of the proceedings its reasons for this accommodation and any objection from either party.

**35-4.** The testimony of more than one witness shall be necessary in order to establish any charge; yet if, in addition to the testimony of one witness, corroborative evidence be produced, the offense may be considered to be proved.

**35-5.** It belongs to the court to judge the degree of credibility to be attached to all evidence.

**35-6.** No witness afterwards to be examined, unless a member of the court, shall be present during the examination of another witness on the same case, if either party object.

**35-7.** Witnesses shall be examined first by the party introducing them; then cross-examined by the opposite party; after which any member of the court, or either party, may put additional interrogatories. No question shall be put or answered except by permission of the moderator, subject to an appeal to the court. The court shall not permit questions frivolous or irrelevant to the charge at issue.

**Renumber current *BCO* 35-6 through *BCO* 35-14 to read 35-8 through 35-15.**

**ITEM 9: Amend *BCO* 38-1**, regarding counsel for a case without process, by the addition of a final sentence. [Overture 2021-35 was answered in the affirmative as amended.]

***BCO* 38-1.** When any person shall come forward and make his offense known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the presence of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process except by his consent. In the event a confession is intended, a full statement of the facts should be approved by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment. The accused person has the right of complaint against the judgment. The person has the right to be assisted by counsel at any point, in accord with the stipulations of *BCO* 32-19.

**ITEM 10: Amend *BCO* 38-1 and 42-2** to allow appealing a censure in a Case Without Process. [Overture 2021-19 was answered in the affirmative.]

***BCO* 38-1.** When any person shall come forward and make his offense known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the presence of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process except by his consent. In the event a confession is intended, a full statement of the facts should be approved by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment. ~~The accused has the right of complaint against the judgment.~~ A censured person has the right to appeal (*BCO* 42).

***BCO* 42-2.** ~~Only~~ The only parties entitled to an appeal are those who have submitted to a regular trial, those appealing a censure in a *BCO* 38-1 case without process, and those appealing a *BCO* 34-10 divestiture without censure.

**ITEM 11: Amend BCO 42-6** regarding vote required for maintaining censure during an appeal.  
[Overture 2021-21 was answered in the affirmative.]

**BCO 42-6.** Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has been finally decided in the higher court. However, the court of original jurisdiction may, for sufficient reasons duly recorded, prevent the appellant from approaching the Lord's Table, and if an officer, prevent him from exercising some or all his official functions, until the case is finally decided (cf. BCO 31-10; 33-4). This shall never be done in the way of censure, and shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority.

**ITEM 12: Amend BCO 43-2 and 43-3** regarding timing for considering a complaint.  
[Overture 21 was answered in the affirmative as amended.]

**43-2.** A complaint shall first be made to the court whose act or decision is alleged to be in error. Written notice of complaint, with supporting reasons, shall be filed with the clerk of the court within sixty (60) days following the meeting of the court. The court shall consider the complaint at its next stated meeting, or at a called meeting prior to its next stated meeting, provided that the complaint has been filed with the clerk at least ten (10) days in advance. If the complaint is filed with less than ten (10) days-notice, the court may consider the complaint at a later meeting not more than 60 days later. No attempt should be made to circularize the court to which complaint is being made by either party.

**43-3.** If, after considering a complaint, the court alleged to be delinquent or in error is of the opinion that it has not erred, and denies the complaint, the complainant may take that complaint to the next higher court. If the lower court fails to consider the complaint against it by or at its next stated meeting, provided that the complaint has been filed with the clerk at least ten (10) days in advance, the complainant may take that complaint to the next higher court. If the complaint is filed with less than ten (10) days-notice, the court may consider the complaint at a later meeting not more than 60 days later. Written notice thereof shall be filed with both the clerk of the lower court and the clerk of the higher court within thirty (30) days of notification of the last court's decision.

Notification of the last court's decision shall be deemed to have occurred on the day of mailing (if certified, registered or express mail of a national postal service or any private service where verifying receipt is utilized), the day of hand delivery, or the day of confirmed receipt in the case of email or facsimile. Furthermore, compliance with such requirements shall be deemed to have been fulfilled if a party cannot be located after diligent inquiry or if a party refuses to accept delivery.

**2022-2023**  
**BCO AMENDMENTS SENT DOWN TO PRESBYTERIES**  
**BY THE 49th GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**FOR VOTING, and for ADVICE AND CONSENT**  
**(TWELVE ITEMS)**

**NOTE:** The Stated Clerk's Office sends the proposed amendments only in their final form, as approved by the General Assembly.

**ITEM 1:** Amend *BCO 7*

_____FOR	_____AGAINST	_____ABSTAIN
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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Name of Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM:2:** Amend *BCO 8*

_____FOR	_____AGAINST	_____ABSTAIN
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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Name of Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 3: Amend BCO 15-1 and 15-3 (to be voted on as a unit)**

_____	FOR	_____	AGAINST	_____	ABSTAIN
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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Name of Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 4: Amend BCO 16**

_____	FOR	_____	AGAINST	_____	ABSTAIN
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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Name of Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 5: Amend BCO 21-4 and 24-1 (to be voted on as a unit)**

_____	FOR	_____	AGAINST	_____	ABSTAIN
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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Name of Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 6: Amend *BCO* 31-10 and 33-4 (to be voted on as a unit)**

_____FOR	_____AGAINST	_____ABSTAIN
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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Name of Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 7: Amend *BCO* 33-1 and 34-1 (to be voted on as a unit)**

_____FOR	_____AGAINST	_____ABSTAIN
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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Name of Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 8: Amend *BCO* 35 (to be voted on as a unit)**

_____FOR	_____AGAINST	_____ABSTAIN
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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Name of Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 9: Amend BCO 38-1**

_____	FOR	_____	AGAINST	_____	ABSTAIN
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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Name of Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 10: Amend BCO 38-1 and 42-2 (to be voted on as a unit)**

_____	FOR	_____	AGAINST	_____	ABSTAIN
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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Name of Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 11: Amend BCO 42-6**

_____	FOR	_____	AGAINST	_____	ABSTAIN
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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Name of Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 12: Amend *BCO* 43-2 and 43-3 (to be voted on as a unit)**

_____	FOR	_____	AGAINST	_____	ABSTAIN
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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Name of Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

Office of the Stated Clerk  
Presbyterian Church in America  
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 105  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143  
Phone: 678-825-1000  
plowrey@pcanet.org



**LOCATION AND DATES OF UPCOMING ASSEMBLIES**

50<sup>th</sup> General Assembly     June 13-16, 2023     Memphis, TN

51<sup>st</sup> General Assembly     June 10-14, 2023     Richmond, VA

As more locations and dates are confirmed for future  
General Assemblies, they will be listed on the  
PCA General Assembly website: <https://pcaga.org/>

If your presbytery is interested in hosting the General Assembly, please  
contact [events@pcanet.org](mailto:events@pcanet.org).

## MEETING SCHEDULE FOR COMMITTEES OF COMMISSIONERS

### PLEASE NOTE:

- These dates are subject to change. Please have your CoC appointments check the most current schedule online at [www.pcaga.org](http://www.pcaga.org) before making travel arrangements.
- To serve on a Committee of Commissioners, you must be a registered commissioner.
- Room assignments will be announced in preparation materials for General Assembly.

### MONDAY OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

9:00 a.m.                      Commissioner Registration Open

10:00 a.m.                      Briefing for Overtures Committee

Immediately following the Overtures Briefing - Overtures Committee Meeting begins

11:00 a.m.                      Briefing for Committees of Commissioners

1:00 p.m.                      Meetings of the Committees of Commissioners begin:  
    Administrative Committee  
    Covenant Theological Seminary  
    Geneva Benefits  
    Reformed University Fellowship

### TUESDAY OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

7:00 a.m.                      Commissioner Registration Open

8:00 a.m.                      Briefing for Committees of Commissioners

9:00 a.m.                      Meetings of the Committees of Commissioners begin:  
    Committee on Discipleship Ministries  
    Covenant Theological Seminary  
    Interchurch Relations  
    Mission to North America  
    Mission to the World  
    PCA Foundation  
    Ridge Haven

## REPORT OF APPOINTEES TO NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND REVIEW OF PRESBYTERY RECORDS

Due in the Stated Clerk's Office February 13, 2023

~ Appointments effective immediately~

Presbytery\_\_\_\_\_

Attested by:\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Nominations Committee Chairman:\_\_\_\_\_

Name (not signature)

### Appointee to General Assembly Nominating Committee

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address\_\_\_\_\_

### Appointee to General Assembly Review of Presbytery Records (RPR) Committee

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address\_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Stated Clerk of General Assembly ♦ 1700 North Brown Road, Suite 105 ♦ Lawrenceville, GA, 30043 ♦ email: [hharrison@pcanet.org](mailto:hharrison@pcanet.org)

NOTE: *This form should be submitted to the PCA Stated Clerk's Office by the date above in order for the representative to the GA Nominating Committee to receive information regarding the March meeting of the Nominating Committee*, where the bulk of the work is done. This form may be used however, anytime during the 3-year term that there is a change to the representative of either Committee.

**Please note that a Nominee Biographical Form  
(060) is NOT NEEDED from these appointees.**

## FORMULA FOR APPOINTMENT TO NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND RPR

Please follow the guidelines below carefully, so that all presbyteries will be electing the proper type of elder to each Committee, and there will be equal representation of ruling elders to teaching elders (*BCO* 14-1, 10). Terms on the Nominating Committee and Review of Presbytery Records (RPR) Committee are 3 years, ending after General Assembly in year noted under "Class". If, for any reason, a presbytery must replace its previously appointed representative, the same type of elder should be appointed.

Presbytery	Type of Elder for Nominating Committee	Type of Elder for RPR	Class
1. Warrior	TE	RE	2025
2. Gulf Coast	RE	TE	2025
3. Westminster	TE	RE	2024
4. Central Georgia	RE	TE	2024
5. Metro Atlanta	TE	RE	2023
6. South Florida	RE	TE	2023
7. Covenant	TE	RE	2025
8. Calvary	RE	TE	2025
9. Grace	TE	RE	2024
10. Mississippi Valley	RE	TE	2024
11. North Texas	TE	RE	2023
12. Evangel	RE	TE	2023
13. James River	TE	RE	2025
14. Tennessee Valley	RE	TE	2025
15. Highlands	TE	RE	2024
16. Pacific	RE	TE	2024
17. New River	TE	RE	2023
19. Ascension	TE	RE	2025
20. Central Florida	RE	TE	2025
21. Central Carolina	TE	RE	2024
22. Eastern Carolina	RE	TE	2024
23. Arizona (previously Southwest)	TE	RE	2023
24. Philadelphia	RE	TE	2023
25. Siouxlans	TE	RE	2025
26. Heritage	RE	TE	2025
27. Eastern Canada	TE	RE	2024
28. Great Lakes	RE	TE	2024
29. Illiana	TE	RE	2023
30. New Jersey	TE	RE	2023
31. Northern New England	TE	RE	2025
33. Pacific Northwest	TE	RE	2024
34. Missouri	RE	TE	2024
35. Northern Illinois	TE	RE	2023
36. Korean Eastern	RE	TE	2023
37. Korean Southwest	TE	RE	2025
38. Palmetto: Columbia Area	RE	TE	2025
39. South Texas	TE	RE	2024
40. Southeast Alabama	RE	TE	2024
41. Korean Central	TE	RE	2023
42. Korean Southeastern	RE	TE	2023
43. Susquehanna Valley	TE	RE	2025

Presbytery	Type of Elder for Nominating Committee	Type of Elder for RPR	Class
44. Korean Southern	RE	TE	2025
45. Heartland	TE	RE	2024
46. South Coast	RE	TE	2024
47. Northern California	TE	RE	2023
48. Potomac	RE	TE	2023
49. Southwest Florida	TE	RE	2025
50. Rocky Mountain	RE	TE	2025
51. Korean Capital	TE	RE	2024
52. Korean Northwest	RE	TE	2024
53. Southeast Louisiana	TE	RE	2023
54. Pittsburgh	RE	TE	2023
55. Fellowship	TE	RE	2025
56. Nashville	RE	TE	2025
57. Metropolitan NY	TE	RE	2024
58. North Florida	TE	RE	2023
59. New York State	RE	TE	2023
60. Southern New England	RE	TE	2024
61. Piedmont Triad	RE	TE	2025
62. Ohio Valley	TE	RE	2025
63. Chesapeake	RE	TE	2023
64. Iowa	TE	RE	2023
65. Blue Ridge	RE	TE	2025
66. Houston Metro	TE	RE	2024
67. Savannah River	RE	TE	2024
68. Suncoast Florida	RE	TE	2023
69. Gulfstream	TE	RE	2023
70. Chicago Metro	RE	TE	2024
71. Wisconsin	TE	RE	2024
72. Canada West	RE	TE	2024
73. Eastern Pennsylvania	TE	RE	2024
74. Philadelphia Metro West	RE	TE	2024
75. Northwest Georgia	TE	RE	2025
76. Georgia Foothills	RE	TE	2025
77. Platte Valley	RE	TE	2023
78. Providence	TE	RE	2024
79. Ohio	TE	RE	2025
80. Central Indiana	TE	RE	2023
81. Catawba Valley	RE	TE	2024
82. Korean Northeastern	TE	RE	2024
83. Tidewater	TE	RE	2023
84. Korean Southwest O.C.	RE	TE	2024
85. Pee Dee	RE	TE	2025
86. Lowcountry	TE	RE	2025
87. Columbus Metro	TE	RE	2023
88. Hills and Plains	RE	TE	2024
89. Rio Grande	TE	RE	2024
90. West Hudson	RE	TE	2025

## CURRENT APPOINTEES TO NOMINATING COMMITTEE\*

**CHAIRMAN**

RE Frank Cohee  
 Cornerstone Presbyterian Church  
 Huntsville, AL  
[frank.cohee@gmail.com](mailto:frank.cohee@gmail.com)

**SECRETARY**

TE Michael VanDerLinden  
 Berryville, VA  
[littleddutch@yahoo.com](mailto:littleddutch@yahoo.com)

**Please remember the class year stays with the presbytery – not the representative.**

<u>Presbytery</u>	<u>Type of Elder</u>	<u>Class of</u>	<u>Current Member</u>
Arizona	TE	2023	TE Kelley Hand
Ascension	TE	2025	
Blue Ridge	RE	2025	
Calvary	RE	2025	
Canada West	RE	2024	
Catawba Valley	RE	2024	TE Bill Thrailkill
Central Carolina	TE	2024	TE Derek Wells
Central Florida	RE	2025	
Central Georgia	RE	2024	RE John Mitchell
Central Indiana	TE	2023	TE Charles Anderson
Chesapeake	RE	2023	RE Bradley Chwastyk
Chicago Metro	RE	2024	RE Don Kooy
Columbus Metro	TE	2023	TE Justin Grimm
Covenant	TE	2025	
Eastern Canada	TE	2024	TE Kevin Rogers
Eastern Carolina	RE	2024	TE Christopher Garrett
Eastern Pennsylvania	TE	2024	TE Douglas Tharp
Evangel	RE	2023	RE Miles Gresham
Fellowship	TE	2025	
Georgia Foothills	RE	2025	
Grace	TE	2024	TE Jim McCarthy
Great Lakes	RE	2024	TE Jonathan Saunders
Gulf Coast	RE	2025	TE Dennis Shackleford
Gulfstream	TE	2023	TE David Cassidy
Heartland	TE	2024	TE Rick Franks
Heritage	RE	2025	
Highlands	TE	2024	TE Skip Gillikin
Hills and Plains	RE	2024	RE Thomas Kirkeby
Houston Metro	TE	2024	RE Dave Cias
Illiana	TE	2023	TE Alex Eppstein
Iowa	TE	2023	TE Brian Janssen
James River	TE	2025	
Korean Capital	TE	2024	TE Steve Sun Kyo Yoon
Korean Central	TE	2023	
Korean Eastern	RE	2023	
Korean Northeastern	TE	2024	TE Paul Hoochan Lee
Korean Northwest	RE	2024	
Korean Southeastern	RE	2023	TE Anthony Lee
Korean Southern	RE	2025	

Korean Southwest	TE	2025	
Korean Southwest OC	RE	2024	
Lowcountry	TE	2025	
Metro Atlanta	TE	2023	TE Hace Cargo
Metropolitan New York	TE	2024	TE Bruce O'Neill
Mississippi Valley	RE	2024	RE James Elkin
Missouri	RE	2024	RE John Ranheim
Nashville	RE	2025	
New Jersey	TE	2023	TE Stephen O'Neill
New River	TE	2023	TE Michael VanDerLinden
New York State	RE	2023	TE Daniel Wells
North Florida	TE	2023	TE Dave Abney
North Texas	TE	2023	TE Benjamin Wheeler
Northern California	TE	2023	TE Bob Crossland
Northern Illinois	TE	2023	TE Justin Coverstone
Northern New England	TE	2025	TE Per Almquist
Northwest Georgia	TE	2025	
Ohio	TE	2025	
Ohio Valley	TE	2025	
Pacific	RE	2024	
Pacific Northwest	TE	2024	RE Micah Meeuwsen
Palmetto	RE	2025	
Pee Dee	RE	2025	
Philadelphia	RE	2023	TE Maranatha Chung
Philadelphia Metro West	RE	2024	RE Nathan Carlson
Piedmont Triad	RE	2025	
Pittsburgh	RE	2023	RE Timothy Baird
Platte Valley	RE	2023	TE Andrew Lightner
Potomac	RE	2023	RE Eric Jan
Providence	TE	2024	RE Frank Cohee
Rio Grande	TE	2024	
Rocky Mountain	RE	2025	
Savannah River	RE	2024	RE James Scarbrough
Siouxlands	TE	2025	
South Coast	RE	2024	
South Florida	RE	2023	
South Texas	TE	2024	TE Ben Michael Hailey
Southeast Alabama	RE	2024	TE Parker Johnson
Southern Louisiana	TE	2023	TE Ricky Glenn
Southern New England	RE	2024	TE Robert Steven Hill
Southwest Florida	TE	2025	
Suncoast Florida	RE	2023	TE Dwight Dolby
Susquehanna Valley	TE	2025	
Tennessee Valley	RE	2025	
Tidewater	TE	2023	TE Benjamin Lyon
Warrior	TE	2025	
West Hudson	RE	2025	
Westminster	TE	2024	TE Robert Dykes
Wisconsin	TE	2024	

**CURRENT APPOINTEES TO  
COMMITTEE ON REVIEW OF PRESBYTERY RECORDS\***

<b>CHAIRMAN</b> TE Hoochan Paul Lee Paramus, NJ <a href="mailto:pastorpaullee@gmail.com">pastorpaullee@gmail.com</a>	<b>VICE CHAIRMAN</b> TE Christopher Wright Delhi PC Delhi, LA <a href="mailto:delhipreschurch@gmail.com">delhipreschurch@gmail.com</a>	<b>SECRETARY</b> TE Eddie Lim Grace Community PC Suwanee, GA <a href="mailto:edlim315@gmail.com">edlim315@gmail.com</a>	<b>ASST. SECRETARY</b>
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**Please remember the class year stays with the presbytery – not the representative.**

<u>Presbytery</u>	<u>Type of Elder</u>	<u>Class of</u>	<u>Current Member</u>
Arizona	RE	2023	TE Thomas Troxell
Ascension	RE	2025	
Blue Ridge	TE	2025	
Calvary	TE	2025	
Canada West	TE	2024	
Catawba Valley	TE	2024	TE Stephen Stout
Central Carolina	RE	2024	RE Flynt Jones
Central Florida	TE	2025	
Central Georgia	TE	2024	TE Elliott Everitt
Central Indiana	RE	2023	RE Dan Barber
Chesapeake	TE	2023	TE Donald Dove
Chicago Metro	TE	2024	TE Dan Adamson
Columbus Metro	RE	2023	TE Nate Conrad
Covenant	RE	2025	
Eastern Canada	RE	2024	
Eastern Carolina	TE	2024	RE Daniel Prins
Eastern Pennsylvania	RE	2024	RE Terry Carnes
Evangel	TE	2023	TE Greg J. Poole
Fellowship	RE	2025	
Georgia Foothills	TE	2025	
Grace	RE	2024	TE Grover Gunn
Great Lakes	TE	2024	TE Elliott Pinegar
Gulf Coast	TE	2025	
Gulfstream	RE	2023	RE Dan Hudson
Heartland	RE	2024	TE Dale Thiele
Heritage	TE	2025	
Highlands	RE	2024	
Hills and Plains	TE	2024	TE Michael Philliber
Houston Metro	RE	2024	TE Dennis Hermerding
Illiana	RE	2023	RE Keith Phillips
Iowa	RE	2023	TE Brian Janssen
James River	RE	2025	
Korean Capital	RE	2024	TE Hyung Min David Bae
Korean Central	RE	2023	TE Brian Park
Korean Eastern	TE	2023	TE Daniel Jinkyu Park
Korean Northeastern	RE	2024	TE Hoochan Paul Lee
Korean Northwest	TE	2024	
Korean Southeastern	TE	2023	TE Edward Lim
Korean Southern	TE	2025	



Korean Southwest	RE	2025	
Korean Southwest O.C.	TE	2024	TE James Sangmok Park
Lowcountry	RE	2025	
Metro Atlanta	RE	2023	TE Herschel Hatcher
Metropolitan New York	RE	2024	TE James Fredere
Mississippi Valley	TE	2024	TE Christopher Wright
Missouri	TE	2024	TE Chad Townsley
Nashville	TE	2025	
New Jersey	RE	2023	TE Stephen O'Neill
New River	RE	2023	
New York State	TE	2023	
North Florida	RE	2023	TE David Burke
North Texas	RE	2023	RE Randall Gradle
Northern California	RE	2023	TE Brad Mills
Northern Illinois	RE	2023	
Northern New England	RE	2025	TE Josh Henderson
Northwest Georgia	RE	2025	
Ohio	RE	2025	
Ohio Valley	RE	2025	
Pacific	TE	2024	
Pacific Northwest	RE	2024	TE Jerid Krulish
Palmetto	TE	2025	
Pee Dee	TE	2025	
Philadelphia	TE	2023	
Philadelphia Metro West	TE	2024	
Piedmont Triad	TE	2025	
Pittsburgh	TE	2023	TE David Schweissing
Platte Valley	TE	2023	TE Jacob Gerber
Potomac	TE	2023	RE Mark Doehnert
Providence	RE	2024	TE Adam Tisdale
Rio Grande	RE	2024	
Rocky Mountain	TE	2025	
Savannah River	TE	2024	TE Kenneth McHeard
Siouxlands	RE	2025	
South Coast	TE	2024	
South Florida	TE	2023	
South Texas	RE	2024	
Southeast Alabama	TE	2024	TE Reed DePace
Southern Louisiana	RE	2023	RE Ken Kostrzewa
Southern New England	TE	2024	RE Patrick Sewell
Southwest Florida	RE	2025	
Suncoast Florida	TE	2023	TE David Stewart
Susquehanna Valley	RE	2025	
Tennessee Valley	TE	2025	TE Philip Caines
Tidewater	RE	2023	TE Ken Christian Jr.
Warrior	RE	2025	
West Hudson	TE	2025	
Westminster	RE	2024	TE Thomas Rickard
Wisconsin	RE	2024	

## MANUAL OF OPERATIONS

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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#### INTRODUCTION

- A. The *Book of Church Order (BCO)* of the Presbyterian Church in America has established the guiding principles for the formation of committees within the denomination. These principles appear in Chapter 14 concerning the structure of the General Assembly, as follows:

*BCO 14-1*

7. *The Assembly's committees are to serve and not to direct any Church judicatories. They are not to establish policy, but rather execute policy established by the General Assembly.*
8. *The committees serve the Church through the duties assigned by the General Assembly.*
9. *The Assembly's committees are to include proportionate representation of all presbyteries, wherever possible.*
10. *The committees are to be established on the basis of an equal number between teaching and ruling elders.*

These principles are based upon the PCA's commitment to be a 'grass roots' denomination, with leadership rising from the bottom up, rather than modeling a hierarchical, top-down form of leadership. Included within these principles is the important concept that committees should not be self-perpetuating, but that the General Assembly should elect its own leadership. This flows from the clear Biblical teaching of verses such as:

- a. *Deuteronomy 1:9-13 (NIV) "At that time I said to you, 'You are too heavy a burden for me to carry alone. The Lord your God has increased your numbers so that today you are as many as the stars in the sky. May the Lord, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousand times and bless you as he has promised! But how can I bear your problems and your burdens and your disputes all by myself? Choose some wise, understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you.'"*
- b. *Acts 6:2-3 (NIV) "So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them...'"*

- B. In order to assist the General Assembly in determining who might be the best qualified men to perform the duties required of the various committees and boards, a Nominating Committee, consisting of members elected directly by the Presbyteries, has been established. The duties of this Committee are set forth as follows:

*BCO 14-1*

11. *A Nominating Committee shall be comprised of one representative elected by each Presbytery in the following manner. Each Presbytery shall be assigned to a class by the stated clerk based on its date of formation. The members shall serve in classes of three-year terms, alternating between ruling and teaching elders. When necessary, unexpired terms shall be filled by an elder of the same class, teaching or ruling.*

*This committee is to present all nominations for which it is responsible to the next meeting of the Assembly from a slate of men nominated by the Presbyteries. Presbyteries shall utilize the nominating forms provided by the stated clerk for their nominations. Each presbytery may present one teaching elder and one ruling elder for each committee or agency.*

*In addition to nominees for expired terms, the Committee shall nominate for each permanent committee one ruling and one teaching elder as alternates to fill any vacancies that may occur during the year. Each alternate should attend each meeting and fill any vacancy necessary to meet a quorum. In addition to the new nominees from the Presbyteries, alternates not assuming any vacancies during a year will be automatically considered by the Nominating Committee as candidates for nomination to that same committee.*

- C. Based on these principles and guidelines, and because of the built-in turnover in the makeup of this group, the Nominating Committee of the General Assembly has adopted the following Manual of Operations to assist with the orderly conduct of its business.

### **PART I: PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE (NC)**

- A. PURPOSE: To glorify Christ by:

1. Helping the General Assembly nominations process to be orderly (1 Cor 14:40). To that end the NC will regularly:
  - a. Review and refine the operating procedures in accordance with General Assembly policies.
  - b. Report to the General Assembly any changes to committee procedures, including any changes to this manual.
2. Presenting a report of a list of the most qualified candidates as nominees for possible election by the General Assembly each year. In developing this list the NC will consider:
  - a. The qualifications of each candidate recommended by the Presbyteries
  - b. The needs of the individual committees, agencies and commissions
  - c. A proportionate representation of all Presbyteries, wherever possible (BCO 14-1.9)

Committee will also report the number of eligible TEs, REs, and Deacons that were nominated that year by presbyteries for each committee.

- B. DUTIES OF THE MEMBERS:

1. Prayerful consideration of the nominations process and the nominees beginning with receipt of meeting materials (known as the 'Rainbow Book') and ending when elections are completed at each General Assembly.

2. Attendance at ALL meetings of the NC (including the Spring Stated Meeting and the General Assembly Stated Meeting). Members will bring their 'Rainbow Books' to both meetings.
  3. Participation in the process, including:
    - a. Prompt submission of preliminary votes prior to the Spring Stated Meeting (see II.A.5).
    - b. Participation in discussion at all NC meetings.
    - c. Encouraging and instructing their sending Presbyteries to be faithful in developing and recruiting leaders from among their members and in presenting names for possible nomination to the NC in a timely and proper manner.
    - d. Serving as liaison between the NC and the Presbyteries.
- C. DUTIES OF OFFICERS: There shall be two officers of the NC:
1. Chairman. His duties shall be:
    - a. Prepare an agenda for and conduct the meetings of the NC.
    - b. Work with the Stated Clerk to accomplish necessary administrative activities.
    - c. Appoint all sub-committee Chairmen and ad-hoc committee members, when needed.
    - d. Work with Secretary to prepare onsite General Assembly report.
    - e. Communicate to the General Assembly on behalf of the committee.
  2. Secretary. His duties shall be:
    - a. To keep an accurate record of minutes of all NC meetings.
    - b. Subject to approval by the Chairman, prepare brief biographical summaries for both committee nominees and floor nominees for the committee's report to General Assembly.
    - c. In the event the Chairman is unable to serve at any given meeting, to act as a convener and conduct the election of a Chairman pro-tem.
    - d. If the Secretary is unable to serve, the Committee will elect a replacement as needed.

D. DUTIES OF THE OFFICE OF STATED CLERK:

1. Provide secretarial and record keeping for the NC.
2. Handle the planning and payment of travel, housing, and meeting facility needs for the Spring Stated Meeting. It is understood that expenses to attend the General Assembly Stated Meeting are to be borne by the sending church/agency/presbytery of the NC member.
3. Refer all procedural or policy questions about NC procedures not covered by this manual to the Chairman for appropriate action.
4. Provide all materials and forms needed by the Presbyteries to meet the requirements and deadlines of the NC.
5. Prepare a tabulation form, in consultation with the officers of the NC, on which to tally the preliminary votes of the members of the NC. (See II.B.2)
6. Advise the Presbyteries that current Alternates on Boards and Committees will be considered automatically by the Nominating Committee as candidates to that same Committee (per *BCO* 14-1, 11) and that the original biographical form will be applied. An alternate must inform the Stated Clerk of his Presbytery and concurrently the GA Stated Clerk if he does not desire to be considered as a nominee in the coming year.
7. Assemble the 'Rainbow Book' to include:
  - a. Agenda for Spring Stated Meeting
  - b. Extracts from *BCO*, *RAO*, and Bylaws relative to the NC
  - c. List of ineligible members for nominations
  - d. Distribution of committee/boards by presbytery representation
  - e. Spreadsheet of committee/boards by presbytery representation class
  - f. List showing current NC members by class and presbytery
  - g. Qualifications, responsibilities and/or job descriptions provided by each committee and board
  - h. Presbytery Nominee Biographical Form and letter of recommendation (on one page, one side for each) from nominees approved by each presbytery and eligible alternates' forms
  - i. Communications from all committees and agencies authorized to communicate directly with the NC
  - j. The Nomination Committee *Manual of Operations*
8. Immediately following the spring meeting of the NC, notify the men who have been nominated by the committee.

## PART II: THE NOMINATING PROCESS

A. Timetable for all events in the nominating process are set in order to meet deadlines for mailing of the *Commissioners Handbook* prior to each General Assembly and will be as follows (see attached chart):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. August 31st  | PCA Stated Clerk sends Nominations Package to the Presbytery Stated Clerks and members of the NC   |
| 2. Fall Presbytery meetings   | Presbyteries are strongly encouraged to choose nominees at a meeting in the fall of the year.  |
| 3. 4 Months prior to GA   | <p>a. Presbytery Nominees Biographical Forms must be received by the PCA Stated Clerk's office. No forms will be accepted after this date (see RAO 8-4.e).</p> <p>b. Names of members of the NC submitted by Presbytery Stated Clerks</p> <p>c. Deadline for receipt by the Chairman of the NC of communications from all committees and agencies authorized to communicate directly with the NC. These communications will be included in the Rainbow Books for consideration by all members of the NC in their preliminary voting.</p> |
| 4. 1st Business Day of March  | Office of the PCA Stated Clerk makes Rainbow Books available to all members of the NC.   |
| 5. Week prior to NC Spring Stated Meeting – date and time determined by Chair | Preliminary vote forms from members of the NC who are unable to attend the Spring Stated Meeting due at Office of PCA Stated Clerk.  |
| 6. 4th Saturday of March  | Spring Stated Meeting of the NC  |
| 7. 2nd Saturday of April  | NC final report, including biographical summaries, due at Office of PCA Stated Clerk   |
| 8. Mid-May (approximately)  | GA <i>Commissioner's Handbooks</i> available   |
| 9. Mid-June (approximately)   | Meeting of the General Assembly  |
| 10. After Close of Floor Nominations at GA                                    | General Assembly Stated Meeting of NC  |

B. Forms to be used in the Nominating Process

1. Presbytery Nominee Biographical Form for General Assembly.  
This form will consist of two sides. The first side will include all instructions concerning submission of the form and a place for the Presbytery Stated Clerk or a designated representative of Presbytery to sign, authenticating that the individual named in the form was approved by vote of his Presbytery and the date that action

occurred. This page may be hand printed. It is then given to the nominee. When submitted to the Office of the PCA Stated Clerk, it will remain in their files and be used if the nominee is ultimately elected to a Board, Committee or Commission.

The reverse side will include at the top an area for the identification of the nominee. The remainder of the page is to be used by the nominee to include any information he would like the NC to consider in his behalf, including (but not limited to) past/present service on Presbytery and GA committees; education; vocational experience; and other pertinent information. A copy of this page will become a part of the 'Rainbow Book' that is sent to every member of the NC. This form will be designed and periodically revised by the NC after consulting with the Office of the PCA Stated Clerk. The following requirements for this second page will be stressed in the instructions:

- a. On this page Section D MUST be typed or computer printed, with a minimum of one-inch margins and 10-point type size. Hand written/printed copies will not be accepted.
- b. This page is to be just that - ONE PAGE. If more than one page is submitted to the Office of the Stated Clerk, only the first page of that submission will be included in the 'Rainbow Book'.

Each nominee is encouraged to obtain a letter of recommendation from any elder (Teaching or Ruling) in his own Presbytery. This recommendation is limited to one page and must be either typed or computer printed. It must be submitted to the Office of the PCA Stated Clerk along with the nomination form. When the members of the NC receive the 'Rainbow Books', the letter of recommendation will be copied on the back of the Nominee Biographical Form.

- 2. The following instructions apply to the entire submission of the forms listed above:
  - a. The nominee is responsible to send his submission to the Office of the PCA Stated Clerk.
  - b. The Biographical Form and letter of recommendation must be submitted together. The Office of the PCA Stated Clerk will not be responsible for forms that arrive separately.
  - c. The forms must be received by the deadline date printed in Section B. LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED BY THE NC.
- 3. NC Preliminary Vote Forms. A form will be designed each year by the Office of the PCA Stated Clerk, in consultation with the officers of the NC, on which to tally the preliminary votes of the members of the NC.

### **PART III: SPRING STATED MEETING OF THE NC**

- A. Time and place: This meeting will normally be held on the 4th Saturday of March (with adjustments made so as not to conflict with Easter weekend). Any change in date will be determined by vote at the previous Spring Stated meeting.
- B. Items of business will include:
  - 1. Making recommendations for nominees for each of the GA Boards, Committees, and Commissions.
  - 2. Making recommendations on any other business referred to the NC from the General Assembly, such as Overtures.
  - 3. Making recommendations for changes to the Manual of Operations, when needed.
  - 4. Electing a Chairman and Secretary for the following year (seeking to rotate the offices between Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders whenever possible).

### **PART IV: GENERAL ASSEMBLY STATED MEETING**

- A. Time and Place: This meeting will be held after the close of floor nominations at the General Assembly each year, at a time and meeting room to be announced by the Chairman. Members of the NC in attendance at the General Assembly are responsible to watch the announcements for the call to the meeting.
- B. Items of Business will include:
  - 1. Respond to any new vacancies not identified at the time of the Spring Stated Meeting. NC nominees for these vacancies will be made from names which had been submitted by the Presbyteries for the Spring Stated Meeting. (It is important that all members of the NC bring their 'Rainbow Books' to the General Assembly and to the meeting for this purpose.)
  - 2. Review all floor nominations for eligibility and approve them for submission to the General Assembly. The Committee shall elect a sub-committee to include the Chairman, Secretary, and at least two at-large members to prepare Biographical Summaries for the floor nominees that the committee certifies as eligible for nomination for inclusion in the Committee's Supplemental Report. The sub-committee shall prepare the Biographical summaries of floor nominees, employing the same standards and care used in the preparation of Biographical Summaries of committee nominations.
  - 3. Making recommendations on any other business referred to the NC from the General Assembly up to this time.
  - 4. The Chairman and Secretary, with support from the Office of the Stated Clerk, will prepare the supplemental report to the General Assembly.
  - 5. All floor nomination forms timely received by the floor clerks shall be delivered to the Office of the Stated Clerk immediately following the deadline for floor nominations (*RAO 8-4 i*). The Office of the Stated Clerk shall retain the original forms and the staff will make copies for use by the Chairman, Secretary, and subcommittee which prepares the Biographical



Summaries. The original and one copy of each floor nomination form shall be kept by the Office of the Stated Clerk for at least two years.

6. After the chairman has approved the Biographical Summaries of all floor nominees (Manual of Operations of the Nominating Committee, Section I.C.2.b), the Supplemental Report shall be delivered to the Stated Clerk's Office for publication and distribution to the Assembly.

#### **PART V: AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL**

This manual may be amended by a majority vote of those attending any meeting of the NC. The Amendments must be submitted in writing in advance of the vote, giving members of the NC at least two weeks to consider possible changes. The NC will report to the General Assembly any changes to this manual.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF REVIEW OF PRESBYTERY RECORDS (RPR) COMMITTEE**

The Forty-second General Assembly amended the Rules of Assembly Operations, which includes the composition and responsibilities of the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records. The pertinent rules are as follows:

RAO 8-5(a) sets the membership of the committee following the formula used for Nominating Committee. [See formula on page 054.]

### **RAO: ARTICLE VIII.**

#### **8-5. Committee on Review of Presbytery Records.**

- a. The Committee on Review of Presbytery Records shall be comprised of one representative from each presbytery elected by the Presbytery in the manner set forth in *BCO* 14-1.11 for the election of the Nominating Committee. A person who is serving as a member of or on the staff of one of the permanent or special committees, or boards of the General Assembly shall be eligible to serve on this committee.
- b. The Committee shall be scheduled to meet prior to the opening session of the Assembly.
- c. A chairman and vice-chairman for the following year shall be elected by the committee from members who shall be serving in at least the second year of their term.

### **RAO: ARTICLE XVI. REVIEW OF PRESBYTERY RECORDS.**

**16-1.** It is the right and duty of the General Assembly to review, at least once a year, the records of the presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* 40-1 and 2).

**16-2.** General Assembly carries out this review through its Committee on Review of Presbytery Records. The operation of this committee shall be considered a General Assembly expense.

#### **16-3. Guidelines for Keeping Presbytery Minutes**

- a. The stated clerk of each presbytery is responsible for the custody of the minutes of presbytery.
- b. The minutes should be neat and legible. Minutes should be dated, and the pages numbered. An official copy of the minutes should be printed and either bound or kept in a good binder.
- c. The minutes should contain the following information:
  - 1) The kind of meeting: stated, called, adjourned stated, or adjourned called. In the case of a called meeting the portion of the call stating the purpose of the meeting should be recorded verbatim in the minutes.
  - 2) The name of the presbytery.
  - 3) The date, time and place of the meeting.
  - 4) The name of the moderator, and if someone other than the regular stated clerk served as a clerk pro-tem, his name should be indicated.
  - 5) That sessions were opened and closed with prayer (*BCO* 10-5).

- 6) The names of those present at the meeting, indicating whether they were teaching elders, or ruling elders and the church they represented. The names of alternate ruling elders and their respective churches should also be included, and the names of visitors may be included.
- 7) Teaching elders not attending and churches not represented should be listed as excused or unexcused.
- 8) Approval of current or previous minutes.
- d. The minutes should be signed by the clerk.
- e. Additional guidelines:
  - 1) Points of order ruled against by the chair and appeals from the decision of the chair, whether sustained or lost, together with the reason given by the chair for his ruling, should be included for the sake of any case that may be carried to a higher court and for the protection of a minority. The record of the presbytery's actions should be recorded.
  - 2) When a count has been ordered, or the vote is by ballot, the number of votes on each side should be entered.
  - 3) The proceedings of a committee of the whole should not be entered in the minutes, but the fact that the assembly went into the committee as a whole. The committee report should be recorded.
  - 4) When a commission is charged with carrying out a task prescribed in the Constitution (such as organizing a church or ordaining or installing a teaching elder), the minutes of presbytery should reflect the completion of each action prescribed in the respective constitutional provision. This may be accomplished by reporting the work of the commission using a form provided by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, which should be included in or appended to the minutes.
  - 5) Minutes of presbytery relating to examinations must list all specific requirements and trials for licensure and/or ordination which have been accomplished, including that each candidate being examined for ordination was required to "state the specific instances in which he may differ with the *Confession of Faith* and Catechisms in any of their statements and/or propositions" (BCO 21-4). This does not mean that a separate vote on each item must be recorded. Presbytery minutes shall record ministers' and ministerial candidates' stated differences with our Standards in their own words. Each presbytery also shall record whether:
    - a) the candidate stated that he had no differences; or
    - b) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be merely semantic; or
    - c) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be more than semantic, but "not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine" (BCO 21-4); or
    - d) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be "out of accord," that is, "hostile to the system" or "strik[ing] at the vitals of religion" (BCO 21-4).
  - 6) Minutes of presbytery relating to ministerial calls shall record that the specific arrangements (BCO 20-1) and the call were found to be in order.
  - 7) Minutes of executive sessions are not exempt from the general requirement that presbytery's actions shall be recorded in the presbytery's minutes and that these minutes (even if kept in a separate section on executive sessions) shall be submitted to the General Assembly for review (BCO 13-11; 14-6.c; 40-1). Presbytery may ask that the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records deal with these minutes confidentially. However, any exceptions to these minutes must be submitted to the General Assembly through the normal procedures.

- 8) Minutes of presbytery dealing with judicial cases shall not be dealt with by Committee on Review of Presbytery Records (*BCO* 40-3) when notice of appeal or complaint has been given the lower court, but still must be submitted for review as part of the record.
- f. The following suggestions are made to clerks and presbyteries for the keeping of minutes:
  - 1) The minutes should record the actions of the presbytery, including all motions adopted and business transacted, together with such additional information as the presbytery deems desirable for historical purposes.
  - 2) Ordinarily in church courts, motions that are lost are not included in the record, unless an affirmative vote for the lost motion is recorded, in which case the lost motion must be shown.
  - 3) Each main motion should normally be recorded in a separate paragraph. Subsidiary and procedural motions may be recorded in the same paragraph with the main motion to which it pertains.

**16-4. Guidelines for Submitting of Presbytery Records:**

- a. The stated clerk of each presbytery is to provide the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly with copies of all minutes to be reviewed in one of two formats: (1) four bound, paginated hard-copies or (2) two bound, paginated hard-copies and one paginated digital copy (preferably as a single document).
- b. The minutes to be reviewed shall include the unreviewed minutes of all presbytery meetings that have been held through the end of the previous calendar year (*BCO* 40-1).
- c. In addition to the minutes themselves, the presbytery shall submit three (3) copies of the following items:
  - 1) A current Directory of Presbytery, including (1) a list of all teaching elders, with their addresses and their status; and of all churches and missions with the address of the church, and the name and address of the Clerk of Session, (2) a listing of all officers and committee members of the regular committees of presbytery, and (3) a list identifying all candidates under care, interns, and licentiates of the presbytery with their addresses and their status.
  - 2) An up-to-date copy of the Standing Rules of the presbytery.
  - 3) A letter stating presbytery's response to the Assembly concerning disposition of any exceptions of substance taken by the past Assembly.
- d. The minutes are to be reviewed and the items listed under 14-4c shall be mailed to the office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly by March 15 each year.
- e. If a presbytery repeatedly fails to submit its minutes, or its responses to exceptions of substance, the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records may recommend to the General Assembly that the provisions of *BCO* 40-1, 4, & 5 be applied.

**16-5.** The stated clerk of each presbytery, or his representative, should be prepared to meet with the committee to answer questions and to clarify any possible discrepancy. The committee should make every reasonable effort to consult with the clerk of the presbytery (or his designee) on any questions before finalizing the report to the General Assembly.

**16-6. Guidelines for Examining Presbytery Records:**

- a. Presbytery minutes shall be examined for conformity to:

- 1) The Scriptures and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America as to the substance of the actions recorded (*BCO* 40-2), and
- 2) The Assembly Guidelines for Keeping Presbytery Minutes, as to form, structure, and minimum content (*RAO* 16-3).
- b. Each set of presbytery minutes and other materials submitted under *RAO* 16-4c should be read by at least two members of the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records.
- c. The findings of the committee with respect to the minutes of each presbytery shall be noted under the following categories as appropriate:
  - 1) Exceptions of substance: Apparent violations of the Scripture or serious irregularities from the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, actions out of accord with the deliverances of the General Assembly, and matters of impropriety and important delinquencies, should be reported under this category.
  - 2) Exceptions of form: Violations of the Assembly's Guidelines for Keeping Presbytery Minutes (*RAO* 16-3), rules of order, etc. should normally be reported under this category. When a minor irregularity from a *BCO* provision or requirement is noted, it may be treated as an exception of form (*BCO* 40-3). If subsequent minutes continue to reflect the same particular exception of form, it may become an exception of substance.
  - 3) Notations: The committee may report to the clerk of presbytery any typographical errors, misspellings, improper punctuation and other minor variations in form and clarity. These are to be given as advice for the respective clerks.

**16-7. Guidelines for Reporting on Presbytery Records:** The report of the committee shall be concise. It shall include the following:

- a. A list of the minutes, by presbyteries, received by the committee.
- b. A list of the presbyteries which have not submitted minutes, if any.
- c. A recommendation concerning the minutes of each presbytery, which shall include:
  - 1) Minutes approved without exception;
  - 2) Minutes approved with exceptions of form, which shall be reported directly to the presbytery;
  - 3) Minutes approved with exceptions of substance which shall be presented to the General Assembly, which presentation shall include citation of any relevant scriptural and/or constitutional references, and provide the committee's rationale for finding the exception of substance;
  - 4) Responses to exceptions of previous Assemblies, if any;
  - 5) Recommendations concerning all responses to exceptions taken by previous Assemblies that have not been disposed of suitably.
- d. Any other recommendation to the Assembly.
- e. A statement of the division of the vote on each recommendation.
- f. Any recommendation which may affect the budget of the Assembly shall be referred to the Committee of Commissioners on Administrative Committee.
- g. A list of members present.
- h. Minority Reports
  - 1) With respect to any recommendation, prior to a recess or adjournment of the Review of Presbytery Records Committee following the adoption of said recommendation, any member of the committee may indicate an intention to file a minority report by giving notice to the chairman.

- 2) The minority report, from at least six (6) members of the committee, must be filed with the chairman of the committee and the office of the Stated Clerk of General Assembly not more than seven (7) days after the adjournment of the RPR Committee meeting.

**16-8.** The report of the committee shall be prepared and handled in the same manner as reports of committees of commissioners as set forth in *RAO 14-8*. Neither the report of the committee nor the General Assembly's approval or disapproval of this report establishes doctrinal precedent.

**16-9.** No partial report of the committee shall be presented without the consent of the Assembly.

**16-10. Guidelines for Responding to General Assembly**

- a. Presbyteries shall be advised of exceptions of form; however, they shall take note in their minutes of exceptions of substance taken by the Assembly, together with their responses adopted by the presbytery to these exceptions. These responses should normally be adopted by Presbytery in the same calendar year as the exceptions were taken by the Assembly. Regardless, responses must be filed no less than one month prior to General Assembly.
- b. Presbyteries shall correspond with the next General Assembly the disposition they have made of the exceptions of substance (including general), with specific reference to presbytery's action as recorded in its minutes. Responses shall be in one of the following forms:
  - 1) Presbytery agrees with the exceptions and corrects its record (if possible), corrects its actions (if possible) and promises to be more careful in the future. Or,
  - 2) Presbytery respectfully disagrees with the exception, states its grounds and refers the exception back to the Assembly.
- c. If, in responding to an exception of substance, a presbytery reports that it disagrees with the conclusion of the Assembly and/or has not corrected or redressed the identified problem; and, the committee (after reviewing the presbytery's response and rationale, and, if a majority so desires, consulting with the Committee on Constitutional Business) continues to believe that the presbytery has persisted in an error that is significant enough to require an Assembly response; then, the committee shall notify the Assembly of the continuing exception, and shall make recommendation as to whether the Assembly should again seek a more acceptable response from the presbytery, or should appoint a representative to present its case and refer the matter to the Standing Judicial Commission to cite the presbytery to appear for proceedings according to *BCO 40-5*.

## SUMMARY OF NOMINATIONS

Must be received by **February 13, 2023**

*NOTE: This form verifies the legitimacy of nominations sent in by candidates from your presbytery. Completion of this form alone does not place a candidate's name in consideration for nomination; in order to do so, a Nominee Biographical form must be e-mailed to **hharrison@pcanet.org** or received by the PCA Stated Clerk's Office by the date above.*

**Presbytery:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Attested by:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Stated Clerk of Presbytery

**Presbytery Nominations Chair:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and contact information (phone or email)

*Each presbytery may nominate 2 men for each Committee and Agency.*

Administrative Committee:

TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_

Committee on Discipleship Ministries (formerly Christian Education and Publications):

TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_

Committee on Constitutional Business:

TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_

Interchurch Relations Committee:

TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_

Mission to North America:

TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_

Mission to the World:

TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_

Reformed University Fellowship:

TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_

Standing Judicial Commission:

TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_

Theological Examining Committee:

TE \_\_\_\_\_ RE \_\_\_\_\_

*The following boards need not be divided between TE and RE. Deacons may be nominated to the RBI Board and to the PCA Foundation Board. Please designate what office the nominee has.*

Covenant College:

☐TE ☐RE \_\_\_\_\_ ☐TE ☐RE \_\_\_\_\_

Covenant Theological Seminary:

☐TE ☐RE \_\_\_\_\_ ☐TE ☐RE \_\_\_\_\_

PCA Foundation:

☐TE ☐RE ☐DE \_\_\_\_\_ ☐TE ☐RE ☐DE \_\_\_\_\_

Geneva Benefits, Inc.:

☐TE ☐RE ☐DE \_\_\_\_\_ ☐TE ☐RE ☐DE \_\_\_\_\_

Ridge Haven:

☐TE ☐RE \_\_\_\_\_ ☐TE ☐RE \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, 1700 North Brown Road, Suite 105, Lawrenceville, GA, 30043  
 Or email: [hharrison@pcanet.org](mailto:hharrison@pcanet.org).

**PRESBYTERY NOMINEE BIOGRAPHICAL FORM**  
**MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE PCA STATED CLERK BY FEBRUARY 13, 2023**  
**Late forms will not be accepted.**

**INSTRUCTIONS (failure to follow these guidelines will disqualify your nomination):**

- Completely fill out all sections
- Sections A, B, and C do not have to be typed, but any printing must be neat. Section D must be typed.
- You are encouraged (but not required) to include a letter of recommendation, from any Teaching or Ruling Elder in your Presbytery. The letter must be limited to one page and must be submitted together with this form.
- Nominee completes form and returns to PCA Stated Clerk:
  - **Email:** [hharrison@pcanet.org](mailto:hharrison@pcanet.org)
  - **Mail:** PCA Stated Clerk, 1700 North Brown Road, Suite 105, Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143 (If mailing, please allow time for the form to be shipped. Late forms will not be accepted, and the form must be received by the deadline.)

**\*\*The Nominee is responsible to ensure the form is received by the PCA Stated Clerk by the deadline.\*\***

**SECTION A: Presbytery Info**

**Nominee:** ☐TE ☐RE ☐Deacon Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee** for which he is nominated: \_\_\_\_\_

**Presbytery:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date approved by Presbytery:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Presbytery Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

Stated Clerk or Presbytery Representative

**SECTION B: Nominee Info**

**Nominee's name** as it should appear in official documents: \_\_\_\_\_

**"Goes by" name** as you would prefer to be called: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominee's address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Work phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mobile phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_



**SECTION C**

Committee/Agency \_\_\_\_\_ ☐TE ☐RE ☐DE Name \_\_\_\_\_

Presbytery \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee’s Church and City \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION D**

This section must be typed. Include any information you wish the Nominating Committee to consider, including (but not limited to) past and present service on presbytery and GA committees, education, vocational experience, and other pertinent information. This page is copied and distributed (along with your one page letter of recommendation if you have provided one) to the Nominating Committee members. No additional material will be provided.

## ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES AND AGENCIES

### I. Types of General Assembly Committees and Agencies

*Permanent Committees* (BCO 14-1,12, RAO 4-2, “PCA Corporate Bylaws” V-G.). [Elected by the Assembly]

Administrative Committee (AC)

Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM)

Mission to the World (MTW)

Mission to North America (MNA)

Reformed University Ministries (RUM)

*Agencies* (RAO 4-3, “PCA Corporate Bylaws” V-G.). [Elected by the Assembly]

Covenant Theological Seminary (CTS)

Covenant College (CC)

PCA Foundation (PCAF)

Ridge Haven Conference Center (RH)

Geneva Benefits

*Special Committees* (RAO 4-4)

Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) [Elected by the General Assembly]

Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB) [Elected by the General Assembly]

Theological Examining Committee (TEC) [Elected by the General Assembly]

Nominating Committee (NC) [RAO 8-4, BCO 14-1,11. Elected by Presbyteries assigned to a class by Stated Clerk based on date of formation of Presbytery]

Committee on Review of Presbytery Records (RPR) [RAO 8-5, BCO 14-1,11. Elected by Presbyteries assigned to a class by Stated Clerk based on date of formation of Presbytery].

*Committees of Commissioners* (RAO 14-2) [Elected by Presbyteries according to formula established by the Stated Clerk]

*Ad Interim* *Committees* (RAO Article IX) [Appointed by Moderator or elected by the General Assembly]

### II. Standing Judicial Commission

The SJC is unique. It is not a BCO 14-1, 12 permanent committee or agency of the General Assembly. It is not an RAO 4-4 special committee. It is not a sub-committee of the Administrative Committee but is funded by the AC (RAO 17-1). It is a standing commission of the General Assembly, directly elected by the Assembly (BCO 15-4).

### III. Exclusions

RAO 8-4, i. “The nominee is to give consent to only one nomination.” [Note: this is contrary to *Robert’s Rules of Order*, Ch. XIV, § 46, Tenth edition, p 418, ll. 13-17. However, the RAO is of higher parliamentary authority than RRO].

BCO 15-4. “No person may serve concurrently on the General Assembly’s Standing Judicial Commission and any of the General Assembly’s permanent committees.”

BCO 14-1, 12. “Persons who have served for a full term, or for at least two years of a partial term, on one of the Assembly’s permanent committees or agencies shall not be eligible for re-election to an

Assembly committee until one year has elapsed. (Exceptions may be permitted in agency bylaws approved by the Assembly)."

RAO 4-6. "No individual shall serve on more than one Assembly committee, or agency at one time, except those who serve as permanent committee representatives on the Administrative Committee of General Assembly and those who serve on *Ad Interim* Committees."

RAO 4-7. "Employees of the Assembly's committees or agencies are not eligible for office on an Assembly's committee or agency which administers matters directly related to their area of employment."

RAO 14-2. "Commissioners serving on permanent committees or sub-committees of the Assembly or the staffs thereof are not eligible to serve on any Committees of Commissioners. For the purpose of defining those ineligible for service in Committees of Commissioners, permanent committee "staff" is to be understood as persons required to be examined by the Theological Examining Committee (BCO 14-1, 12.) and all permanent committee support personnel. All commissioners should bear in mind *Robert's Rules of Order* regarding abstaining from voting on a question of direct personal interest (RRO § 45)."

RAO 4-5. "The membership of committees or agencies shall be limited to the same constitutional provisions (BCO 14-1, 12) as those of the permanent committees: namely, that those who have served for at least a full term, or at least two years of a partial term on one of the Assembly's permanent committees or agencies shall not be eligible for reelection to an Assembly committee or agency until one year has elapsed, unless provision has been approved by the agency Bylaws. Nominations shall be handled according to the BCO 14-1, 11. These provisions shall not apply to *Ad Interim* committees, study committees or other committees appointed."

#### IV. Specified Permission

*Sub-Committees of Permanent Committees may include non-elected members*

RAO 4-10, a. "Membership of subcommittees may include persons not elected to the permanent committee, provided the subcommittee chairman is a permanent committee member."

*Permanent or Special Committee Members May Serve on Review of Presbytery Records*

RAO 8-5 a. The Committee on Review of Presbytery Records shall be comprised of one representative from each presbytery elected by the Presbytery in the manner set forth in BCO 14-1, 11 for the election of the Nominating Committee. A person who is serving as a member of or on the staff of one of the permanent or special committees, or boards of the General Assembly shall be eligible to serve on this committee.

#### V. Length of Terms

*Three-year Terms*

IRC (RAO 8-1)

NC (BCO 14-1, 11)

TEC (BCO 14-1, 14)

RPR (RAO 8-5, BCO 14-1, 11)

*Four-year Terms*

AC (BCO 14-1, 12)

CC ("PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-2)

CCB (RAO 8-2)

CTS ("PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-3)  
 GENEVA ("PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-1)  
 PCAF ("PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-5)  
 SJC (BCO 15-4)

#### *Five-Year Terms*

CDM (BCO 14-1, 12)  
 MNA (BCO 14-1, 12)  
 MTW (BCO 14-1, 12)  
 RUM (BCO 14-1, 12)  
 RH ("PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-4)

### **VI. Immediate Re-election or Successive Terms**

*Interchurch Relations Committee* (Two consecutive three-year terms)

RAO 8-1. There shall be an Interchurch Relations Committee composed of three teaching elders and three ruling elders who may serve two consecutive, three-year terms of office. There shall be a ruling elder and a teaching elder to serve as alternates.

*Geneva* (Two consecutive four-year terms)

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-1. Trustees shall be eligible for re-election to a second four-year term after which there must be a one-year interval before further re-election.

Geneva's Corporate Bylaws (3.05) were amended in 2010 to define a partial term to be less than 36 months (3 years), instead of the 2 years prescribed in the BCO (14-1.12).

*CC* (Two consecutive four-year terms)

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-2. A Trustee shall be eligible at the end of any full four-year term for re-election to a second four-year term, after which there must be a one-year interval before re-election.

*CTS* (Two consecutive four-year terms)

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-3. A Trustee shall be eligible at the end of any full four-year term for re-election to a second four-year term, after which there must be a one-year interval before re-election.

*RH* (Two consecutive four-year terms)

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-4. Directors shall be eligible for reelection to a second five-year term after which there must be a one year interval before further reelection.

*PCAF* (Two consecutive four-year terms)

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-5. Directors shall be eligible for reelection to a second four-year term after which there must be a one-year interval before further election.

PCAF's Corporate Bylaws state that RAO 4-5 does not apply to them; thus, men who would otherwise be required to take a sabbatical leave from committee service may serve on PCAF. *M29GA*, p. 154.

*Standing Judicial Commission*

There is no statement in the *BCO* or *RAO* requiring a year off after serving a term or prohibiting successive terms.

### **VII. Resignations**

RAO 8-4, k. "In the event of the resignation of any member of an Assembly elected committee or agency, such resignation should be presented to the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The

Stated Clerk, shall, after consultation with the Chairman of the respective committee or board, be authorized to accept such resignation on behalf of the Assembly. He is to report such actions to the next General Assembly, and arrange for the nomination of a replacement by the Assembly's Nominating Committee, where such replacement is appropriate."

## VIII. Recommendation of Candidates by Agencies

### GENEVA

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-1. The Board may make requests to the Presbyteries to nominate specific men to the Board and may submit to the General Assembly Nominating Committee letters of recommendation concerning particular nominees from the Presbyteries.

### CC

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-2. In addition, the Board may make requests to the Presbyteries to nominate specific men to the Board and may submit to the Assembly Nominating Committee letters of recommendation concerning particular nominees from the presbyteries.

### CTS

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-3. In addition, the Board may make requests to the Presbyteries to nominate specific men to the Board and may submit to the Assembly Nominating Committee letters of recommendation concerning particular nominees from the presbyteries.

### RH

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-4. In addition, the Ridge Haven Board may make request to presbyteries to nominate specific men to the Board and may submit to the Assembly Nominating Committee letters of recommendation concerning particular nominees from presbyteries.

### PCAF

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-5. As stated above, the Directors shall be elected through the standard nomination and election procedures, except that the Board of Directors may make requests to the Presbyteries to nominate specific men for election as Directors, and may submit to the Assembly Nominating Committee letters of recommendation concerning particular nominees for election as Directors from the Presbyteries.

## IX. Geographical Distribution of Members

### *Recommended but not Absolutely Required for Committees and Agencies –*

BCO 14-1, 9. "The Assembly's committees are to include proportionate representation of all presbyteries, wherever possible."

RAO 8-4, b. The Nominating Committee should be reminded of paragraph BCO 14-1, 9 regarding proportionate representation *wherever possible* [emphasis added].

RAO 8-4, c. No presbytery shall *ordinarily* [emphasis added] be represented by more than one person nominated for any given Committee. This includes alternates.

### *Required for the Standing Judicial Commission -*

BCO 15-4. "No person may be elected if there is already a member of the commission from the same Presbytery; but if a person is elected and changes Presbytery, he may continue to serve his full term. No person may serve concurrently on the General Assembly's Standing Judicial Commission and any of the General Assembly's permanent committees."

*Specifically Exempted**RH*

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-4. The members of the Board of Directors of Ridge Haven are not subject to the *BCO* Chapter 14 relating to proportionate representation of all Presbyteries or for equal representation of Teaching and Ruling Elders.

**X. Parity of Elders. Deacons, and Non-PCA Members Serving***Parity of Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders in Most Cases*

*BCO* 14-1, 10. The committees are to be established on the basis of an equal number between teaching and ruling elders.

*Parity of Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders not Required**GENEVA*

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-1. The Trustees are not subject to the provisions of the *BCO*, Chapter 15 relating to proportionate representation of all Presbyteries or for equal representation of Teaching and Ruling Elders.

*CC*

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-2. There is no required formula for dividing the members of a class between teaching and ruling elders

*CTS*

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-3. There is no required formula for dividing the members of a class between teaching and ruling elders.

*RH*

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-4. The members of the Board of Directors of Ridge Haven are not subject to the *BCO* Chapter 14 relating to proportionate representation of all Presbyteries or for equal representation of Teaching and Ruling Elders.

*PCAF*

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-5. All members of the Board of Directors shall be either Teaching Elders, Ruling Elders or Deacons, and at least one-half of such members shall be Ruling Elders and Deacons.

*Deacons Eligible**GENEVA*

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-1. Each member of the Trustees must be either a Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder or Deacon in the Presbyterian Church in America.

*PCAF*

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-5. All of the members of the Board of Directors shall be either Teaching Elders, Ruling Elders or Deacons, and at least one-half of such members shall be Ruling Elders and Deacons.

*Non-PCA members Allowed**CC*

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-2. Up to four men of denominations with which the PCA is in ecclesiastical fellowship may be elected, one to each class. . . . Furthermore, the Board may recommend one nominee per class from another NAPARC member denomination for consideration by the Assembly Nominating Committee, with a maximum of two such members permitted on the Board at one time.

*CTS*

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-3. Each Trustee shall be an ordained teaching or ruling elder of the Presbyterian Church in America and elected by the General Assembly, except that up to two members of each class may be elders of denominations with which the PCA is in ecclesiastical fellowship. . . . Furthermore, the Board may recommend one nominee per class from another NAPARC member

denomination for consideration by the Assembly Nominating Committee, with a maximum of two such members permitted on the Board at one time.

## **XI. Automatic Nomination of Alternates to a Full Term**

*BCO 14-11, 11. (RAO 8-4, g.).* "In addition to the new nominees from the Presbyteries, alternates not assuming any vacancies during a year will be automatically considered by the Nominating Committee as candidates for nomination to that same committee."

## **XII. Partial Terms**

### *General Regulations*

*BCO 14-1, 12.* "Persons who have served for a full term, or for at least two years of a partial term, on one of the Assembly's permanent committees or agencies shall not be eligible for re-election to an Assembly committee until one year has elapsed. (Exceptions may be permitted in agency bylaws approved by the Assembly)."

*RAO 4-5.* "The membership of committees or agencies shall be limited to the same constitutional provisions (*BCO 14-1, 12*) as those of the permanent committees: namely, that those who have served for at least a full term, or at least two years of a partial term on one of the Assembly's permanent committees or agencies shall not be eligible for reelection to an Assembly committee or agency until one year has elapsed, unless provision has been approved by the agency Bylaws. Nominations shall be handled according to the *BCO 14-1, 11*. These provisions shall not apply to *Ad Interim* committees, study committees or other committees appointed."

### *Exceptions*

#### *RH*

"RH Bylaws", V-3. Vacancies. A vacancy on the Board of Directors because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or otherwise, may be filled by the directors for the unexpired portion of the term subject to the approval of the next General Assembly.

#### *GENEVA*

"Geneva Corporate Bylaws", "A director may serve two consecutive "full terms," after which there must be a one-year interval before he may be re-elected. A term constituting less than thirty-six months, such as for a director elected to fill a vacancy, does not constitute a "full term" for the sake of the foregoing sentence. Therefore a director completing a "partial term" of less than thirty-six months may then be elected to two "full terms" thereafter prior to being required to spend at least one year off the board."

*Note: Term years conclude each year at the General Assembly's close of business. The Class of 2005, for instance, ended its term on June 17, 2005.*

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE**

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

1. An AC member should show evidence of love for Jesus Christ and His Word and the works of the General Assembly by prior service in a local church, at Presbytery level and/or on General Assembly level.
2. He should aspire to the office, and be willing and able to commit to the necessary meetings required for the Administrative Committee business (demonstrated by their fulfillment of such requirements in previous offices or committee responsibilities). The AC meets three times a year (October, March and June).
3. He should be willing to promote and support the committee before the churches and presbyteries in word, deed and financial commitment.
4. He should have experience in some of the following: personnel management, accounting, insurance, investment, law, marketing, computer sciences/technologies, fund raising, and stated clerk of presbytery.
5. He should have wisdom and experience in setting policies, goals and objectives, in setting and meeting financial budgets, and in long-range planning.
6. He should complement the broad geographical diversity of the PCA insofar as possible.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **A. WITH REGARD TO PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT:**

1. To recommend policies and oversee planning for the administration of AC operations including manual of operations, personnel, computing for AC, physical space requirements.
2. To recommend policies for the use and oversee planning and management of the PCA office building for the General Assembly.
3. To initiate and approve long range planning.
4. To recommend policies and oversee handling of civil and legal matters for the PCA Corporation and Committee on Administration.
5. To review the compliance to General Assembly directives and corporation bylaws of Committees and Agencies actions and point out discrepancies.
6. To give guidelines for local churches and presbyteries in civil and legal matters.
7. Review of Stated Clerk's/Coordinator's work.
8. To set policies for and approve General Assembly programs and set registration fee.



9. To set policies and oversee the local Assembly Arrangements Committee, including manual for General Assembly Arrangements.
10. To set policies and oversee the planning and operations of the Archives office.
11. To set policies and oversee special projects of service to the PCA constituency such as PCA Directory, Yearbook, and statistics.
12. To set policies and oversee the public relations work of the Stated Clerk and his office.
13. To address all matters relating to the *RAO*, manuals and other matters referred to AC by the General Assembly.
14. To advise the Stated Clerk, as requested, in the referral of matters to the appropriate committees of the General Assembly.
15. To oversee the Stated Clerks' Conference.
16. To oversee the conducting of civil matters which are properly handled by the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (A CORPORATION) according to the policies and directives of the General Assembly.

“The business affairs of the Corporation, as distinguished from the ecclesiastical matters, shall be managed by the Board of Directors, which shall have such powers and duties as are set forth in the charter of the Corporation and the By-laws.”

Bylaws, Article III, Section 1.

#### **B. WITH REGARD TO BUDGET AND FINANCE:**

1. To recommend policies and oversee planning for the AC budget.
2. To review policies for personnel salaries.
3. To oversee the calculating and communicating the GA PARTNERSHIP SHARE (formerly ASKINGS) program.
4. To oversee and participate in raising funds for AC operations.
5. To receive and review the budgets of Assembly Committees and Agencies, to evaluate the proposed budget of each permanent committee and agency and report its considered opinion to the full AC on the adoption thereof.
6. To recommend the auditing firm for the General Assembly Permanent Committees.
7. To recommend policies and oversee the annual AC financial audit.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES**

### **JOB SUMMARY:**

Oversee and encourage the work of the Coordinator and staff of the permanent Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM) as they help churches fulfill the Great Commission among the children, youth, and adults in the congregation. Attend approximately two CDM meetings annually and oversee the policies and programs of CDM as they are implemented through the Coordinator;

### **SPECIFICALLY:**

1. To attend stated meetings (usually in September and March), and any called meetings (usually electronic);
2. To set policy in accordance with the guidance and actions of the General Assembly;
3. To work with Coordinator in implementing the ministry of CDM;
4. To pray regularly for the CDM ministry and provide financial support as the Lord enables;
5. To support and promote CDM's ministry throughout the PCA, especially in the congregation and Presbytery;
6. To demonstrate a commitment and loyalty to the PCA that will encourage local churches to support the work of the Committees and Agencies of the denomination.

### **QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. A ruling or teaching elder who is committed to the PCA and actively serves in his local church;
2. Has a vision for local church discipleship that is based on God's Word and promotes relational connection in the covenant community (WCF 26);
3. Is knowledgeable in the areas of Christian Education, discipleship among children/youth/adults, and/or publishing, but not necessarily a "professional" in these areas;
4. A recognized servant leader in the local church and presbytery.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL BUSINESS**

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. A Ruling or Teaching Elder in good standing within the local church and presbytery.
2. A man of spiritual maturity, wisdom and discernment. A man of consistent prayer.
3. One who has a good working knowledge of the Westminster Standards and especially the *Book of Church Order* and *Rules of Assembly Operations*.

**DUTIES:**

1. Serve as advisor to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly upon his request between General Assemblies.
2. Give advice on non-judicial references upon request.
3. Advise General Assembly regarding the effect of any proposed amendment to the constitution.
4. Report directly to General Assembly on all constitutional inquiries submitted to it by the GA.
5. A member of CCB should be ready to attend the one meeting in April as well as General Assembly.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES COVENANT COLLEGE**

1. Candidates must be those who possess a mature walk with the Lord Jesus Christ and commitment to His Word, meet the requirements established by the bylaws of the corporation as approved by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America.
2. Candidates for the Boards of Trustees should aspire to the office and be willing to commit to the necessary meetings required, as well as to promote the College in their normal activities. Trustees may be asked to work on special projects if their schedules permit.
3. Members of the Boards need to accept and understand thoroughly the importance of integration of faith and learning, the development of a Christian world-and-life view, and the sovereignty of God over all of life.
4. Desirable experience for trustees would include the following: setting policies, goals, and objectives, setting and meeting financial budgets and strategic long-range planning.
5. Trustees must recognize the tremendous financial needs of the annual operating fund and special capital campaigns and should be willing and able to help the College both personally and through their personal influence in these critical areas.
6. Trustees need to recognize the importance of enrollment and be willing and able to encourage prospective students to enroll in the institution by being familiar with various academic and student programs.
7. Members of the Boards of Trustees should be individuals who know and understand the relationship of the various courts in the Presbyterian church and be strong advocates of Christian education and its relationship to evangelism, missions, church planting, and other aspects of the denomination.
8. The Board needs to have a good mix of business and professional people, builders, realtors, investors, industrialists, physicians, clergy, and educators.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

1. Candidates must be those who exhibit a mature walk with the Lord Jesus Christ, evidence commitment to His Word, and meet the requirements established by the bylaws of the corporation as approved by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America.
2. Candidates for the Boards of Trustees must aspire to the office and be willing to commit to the necessary meetings required (three times annually), as well as to promoting the Seminary with their resources and time. Trustees may be asked to work on special projects if their schedules permit.
3. Trustees must accept and understand thoroughly the importance of preparing the next generation of church leaders for many contexts of ministry, and should understand how the standards and practices of the Presbyterian Church in America direct this process.
4. Desirable experience for trustees includes the following: setting policies, goals, and objectives, setting and meeting financial budgets, strategic long-range planning, participation in the educational and mission efforts of the local church and presbytery, and familiarity with the pastoral and doctrinal challenges pastors and other church leaders regularly face.
5. Trustees must recognize the tremendous financial needs of the annual operating fund and special capital campaigns and should be willing and able to help the Seminary both personally and through their personal influence in these critical areas.
6. Trustees must recognize the importance of enrollment and be willing and able to encourage prospective students to enroll in the institution by being familiar with various academic and student programs.
7. Trustees should be individuals who know and understand the relationship of the various courts in the Presbyterian church and be strong advocates of Christian education and its relationship to evangelism, discipleship, church leadership, missions, church planting, and other aspects of the denomination.
8. The Board should have a good mix of business and professional people, builders, realtors, investors, industrialists, physicians, clergy, and educators. Therefore we seek to maintain a ratio of 16 ruling elders and 8 teaching elders on our board of 24, which is usually 4 ruling elders and 2 teaching elders in each four-year class.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. A Teaching or Ruling Elder in good standing within the local church and presbytery.
2. A man of spiritual maturity, wisdom and discernment. A man of consistent prayer.
3. A man who can listen as well as speak. A man who listens with an open mind to the representatives of other denominations. One who is able to process information quickly while keeping in mind the long-range good of the denomination.
4. A man who has a good working knowledge of the Westminster Standards and of PCA polity, especially the *Book of Church Order* and the Rules of Assembly Operations.
5. May serve 2 consecutive, 3 year terms, of office.

**DUTIES:**

1. Be available for stated meetings, including conference calls.
2. Be available to represent the PCA at meetings involving other denominations.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA COMMITTEE**

1. A ruling or teaching elder in good standing within the local church and presbytery.
2. First-hand experience in church planting or in one of the outreach ministries in which MNA is engaged.
3. A man with the time to be involved as a committee member in order to:  
prepare for regular meetings,  
attend regular meetings, and  
be involved in some aspect of MNA, either through his local church, presbytery  
or through some special assignment from the General Assembly MNA Committee
4. A man with the desire and motivation to learn about the needs and special challenges in home missions through the ministry of MNA.
5. A man with a forward vision of what the PCA can become as MNA serves the churches, presbyteries and church planting networks of the PCA in their advancement of the Gospel through church planting and other outreach ministries.
6. A man who is committed to seeing the Gospel advance through the PCA among as many as possible of the many ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic people groups of North America.
7. A man who understands the uniqueness of Reformed theology and ecclesiology and at the same time recognizes the unique forms missions and church planting can take in seeking to fulfill the Great Commission in our time.
8. A man who works well in a group to process important and sensitive information. A man with a concern for the good of the whole rather than a desire to push only one department.
9. A man of spiritual maturity and depth. A man of consistent prayer.
10. A man who can listen as well as speak. A man who listens with an open mind to hear what others are saying, determining deep issues and processing this information quickly while keeping in mind the long-range good of the church.
11. A man of trust. A person who trusts other committee members and staff.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
MISSION TO THE WORLD COMMITTEE**

**A. Qualifications:**

1. Pastors of churches with successful missions programs:
  - a) The church has a regular missions emphasis.
  - b) The church supports with prayer and finances a number of MTW missionaries and ministries.
  - c) The church has commissioned and sent out its members as cross-cultural missionaries.
2. Laymen who are currently involved in their local church's world missions programs:
  - a) They serve on the missions committee.
  - b) They participate on-site in overseas ministries (travel to visit short-term missions service), etc.
3. Have proven leadership qualities and can make good decisions.
4. Knowledgeable of world affairs.
5. Men who carry positions of responsibility in their church, business and community.
6. Familiar with and/or experienced in serving on the governing body of organizations with more than 500 employees and a budget in excess of 50 million dollars.

**B. Responsibilities:**

1. Guard purpose and vision.
2. Select the Coordinator.
3. Support and evaluate the Coordinator.
4. Ensure effective planning.
5. Monitor and strengthen programs and responsibilities.
6. Monitor and approve the missionary candidate screening process.
7. Ensure adequate financial resources.
8. Protect assets and provide financial oversight.
9. Help to build a competent committee.
10. Ensure legal and ethical integrity.
11. Enhance MTW's public standing in the Presbyterian Church in America.



**QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
PCA FOUNDATION**

1. Men who are faithful in their service to the Lord and who recognize and appreciate the special opportunities for giving within the denomination.
2. Men who possess a number of the following unique skills:
  - a) Good background with business/financial experience.
  - b) Close working relationship with investments, investment planning, personal financial or investments counseling.
  - c) Experienced business judgment.
  - d) Should have exposure to long-range planning, goal setting, policy making procedures.
  - e) Familiarity with investment markets, investment techniques, investment advisory services.
  - f) Have good knowledge of PCA & PCA people.
  - g) Have experience in advertising and promotion.
  - h) Have experience in public or private accounting.
  - i) Have experience with philanthropy or gift planning, either personally or as an advisor.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES GENEVA BENEFITS GROUP**

### **I. Bylaws Requirements**

A board member must be a Teaching Elder, a Ruling Elder or a Deacon.

### **II. Desirable Background**

1. Due to the technical nature of the work of the Board, it is desirable that a majority of the board members have a professional business background in the areas of Institutional Investments, Employee Benefits, or Insurance. Geneva prefers members with experience in Accounting, Investment Management, Institutional Investment Consulting, Insurance Risk Management, Insurance Underwriting, Institutional Portfolio Management, Retirement Plan Management and Consulting. Experience in Client Servicing or general business management would also be helpful.
2. In addition to the above qualifications, board members are expected to encourage a ministry focus.
3. Since the Relief Fund is a part of the ministry's overall responsibility, it is important that the Board consists of Teaching Elders who understand the needs of fellow ministers.
4. Nominees for the Board should be willing to give of their time to attend a minimum of three meetings a year, along with several conference calls throughout the year.
5. Current board members completing their first term make good candidates, given their previous experience.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE**

1. A ruling or teaching elder in good standing within the local church and presbytery.
2. An individual with first-hand knowledge and experience with RUF in his presbytery.
3. Has time to be involved as a committee member to:
  - prepare for regular meetings (at least two a year),
  - attend regular meetings, and
  - be involved in some aspect of RUF either through a campus or presbytery committee or through some particular assignment from the GA RUF Committee.
4. Has the desire and motivation to learn about the needs and unique challenges in campus ministry through the ministry of RUF.
5. Has a forward vision of how RUF can strengthen the church.
6. Is committed to a biblical worldview and how that relates to the marketplace of ideas – the college campus.
7. Understands the uniqueness of Reformed theology and ecclesiology and how it drives the ministry of RUF.
8. Wants to see students grow in grace, fellowship, and service.
9. Has spiritual maturity and depth and strives to be committed to consistent prayer and bible reading.
10. Works well in a group to process important and sensitive information.
11. Can listen as well as speak. An individual who listens with an open mind to hear what others are saying, determining serious issues and processing this information quickly while keeping in mind the long-range good of the church.
12. Actively seeks to cultivate trust with other committee members and staff.
13. Understands the importance of reaching students on college campuses with the gospel.
14. Demonstrates a willingness to give financially (as he is able) to support the work of RUF.
15. Committed to connecting other potential supporters to RUF.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES RIDGE HAVEN**

### **QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. Board Members are eligible for re-election to a second five-year term after which there must be a one-year interval before further re-election.
2. The members of the Board of Directors of Ridge Haven are not subject to the *BCO* Chapter 14 relating to proportionate representation of Teaching and Ruling Elders.
3. Nominees to the Ridge Haven Board of Directors are preferred to have been personally involved in various conferences, camps, or other activities that will enable them to be familiar with all of the work of the Center.
4. For the present and until such time as Ridge Haven is able to expand locations to other areas of the United States, nominees to the Ridge Haven Board of Directors are preferred to live within the areas that most effectively serve the PCA constituency of the Southeastern states, Mid-Atlantic states, Mississippi and Ohio Valley states, and the states immediately west of and adjacent to the Mississippi River.
5. Men with the following skills and/or experience are especially needed: Financial management, administration, real-estate development, site development, camping and conferencing, landscaping, construction, and fund-raising as well as the areas involved in the development and operation of the Center.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Ridge Haven Board members are asked to commit themselves first and foremost to labor spiritually by regularly praying for Ridge Haven, its staff, volunteers, activities, projects, and needs and exercising their faith on behalf of Ridge Haven with regard to each of these things.
2. Ridge Haven Board members are asked to expend personal time and energy by involvement that includes participation in all Board activities and meetings and hands-on participation in being a part of various conferences, camps, or other activities that will enable familiarity with all aspects of Ridge Haven.
3. Ridge Haven Board members are expected to promote Ridge Haven in their own local congregation and presbytery creating invitations for Ridge Haven presentations, distributing literature and recruiting and encouraging individual, church, and presbytery support.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
STANDING JUDICIAL COMMISSION**

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. A Ruling or Teaching Elder in good standing within the local church and presbytery.
2. A man of spiritual maturity, wisdom and discernment. A man of consistent prayer.
3. A man who can listen as well as speak. A man who listens with an open mind to the concerns of complainants and respondents. One who is able to process information quickly while keeping in mind the long-range good of the church.
4. One who has a good working knowledge of the Westminster Standards and of PCA polity, especially the *Book of Church Order* and Rules of Assembly Operations.
5. A man of trust. A person who trusts other commission members.
6. A current member completing his first term makes a particularly good candidate to serve again, since the learning curve will be significantly reduced. He can succeed himself with no waiting period.

**DUTIES:**

1. A member of SJC should be ready to attend at least 2 meetings of the full SJC: (mid-October and first of March).
2. He will be appointed to participate on judicial panels as needed.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES THEOLOGICAL EXAMINING COMMITTEE**

### **QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. A Teaching or Ruling Elder in good standing within the local church and presbytery.
2. A man of spiritual maturity, wisdom and discernment. A man of consistent prayer.
3. A man who can listen as well as speak. One who is able to process information quickly while keeping in mind the long-range good of the denomination.
4. A man who has a good working knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, Reformed Theology, the Westminster Standards and of PCA polity, especially the *Book of Church Order* and the *Rules of Assembly Operations*.

### **DUTIES:**

This committee shall examine all first and second level administrative officers of committees, boards and agencies, and those acting temporarily in these positions who are being recommended for first time employment. They are to be examined in the areas of:

- a. Christian experience
- b. Theology
- c. The Sacraments
- d. Church government
- e. Bible content
- f. Church History
- g. History of the Presbyterian Church in America

## **PART I**

### **DIRECTORY OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES AND AGENCIES 2022-2023**

#### **I. OFFICERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

##### **Moderator**

RE John Bise  
620 Owens Dr. SE  
Huntsville, AL 35801-1819  
Phone: 256-539-6541  
E-mail: [jbise@johnbise.net](mailto:jbise@johnbise.net)

##### **Stated Clerk**

TE Bryan Chapell  
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 105  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143  
Phone: 678-825-1000  
E-mail: [ac@pcanet.org](mailto:ac@pcanet.org)

## II. MINISTRIES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### **Administration**

TE Bryan Chapell, Coordinator  
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 105  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143  
Phone: 678-825-1000  
E-mail: [ac@pcanet.org](mailto:ac@pcanet.org)  
[www.pcaac.org](http://www.pcaac.org)

### **Committee on Discipleship Ministries**

TE Stephen T. Estock, Coordinator  
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 102  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143  
Phone: 678-825-1100  
E-mail: [sestock@pcanet.org](mailto:sestock@pcanet.org)  
[www.pcacdm.org](http://www.pcacdm.org)

### **Covenant College**

RE J. Derek Halvorson, President  
14049 Scenic Highway  
Lookout Mountain, GA 30750-4164  
Phone: 706-419-1117  
E-mail: [derek.halvorson@covenant.edu](mailto:derek.halvorson@covenant.edu)  
[www.covenant.edu](http://www.covenant.edu)

### **Covenant Theological Seminary**

TE Tom C. Gibbs, President  
12330 Conway Road  
St. Louis, MO 63141-8609  
Phone: 314-434-4044  
E-mail: [tom.gibbs@covenantseminary.edu](mailto:tom.gibbs@covenantseminary.edu)  
[www.covenantseminary.edu](http://www.covenantseminary.edu)

### **Mission to North America**

TE Irwyn Ince, Coordinator  
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 101  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143  
Phone: 678-825-1200  
E-mail: [iince@pcanet.org](mailto:iince@pcanet.org)  
[www.pcamna.org](http://www.pcamna.org)

### **Mission to the World**

TE Lloyd Kim, Coordinator  
1600 North Brown Road  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8141  
Phone: 678-823-0004  
E-mail: [lloyd.kim@mtw.org](mailto:lloyd.kim@mtw.org)  
[www.mtw.org](http://www.mtw.org)

### **PCA Foundation, Inc.**

RE Timothy W. Townsend, President  
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 103  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143  
Phone: 678-825-1040  
E-mail: [ttownsend@pcanet.org](mailto:ttownsend@pcanet.org)  
[www.pcafoundation.com](http://www.pcafoundation.com)

### **PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc.**

TE Edward W. Dunnington, President  
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 106  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143  
Phone: 678-825-1260  
E-mail: [ed.dunnington@pcarbi.org](mailto:ed.dunnington@pcarbi.org)  
[www.pcarbi.org](http://www.pcarbi.org)

### **Reformed University Fellowship**

RE Will W. Huss Jr., Coordinator  
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 104  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143  
Phone: 678-825-1070  
E-mail: [will.huss@ruf.org](mailto:will.huss@ruf.org)  
[www.ruf.org](http://www.ruf.org)

### **Ridge Haven**

RE Wallace Anderson, Exec. Director  
215 Ridge Haven Road  
Brevard, NC 28712  
Phone: 828-862-3916  
E-mail: [wallace@ridgehaven.org](mailto:wallace@ridgehaven.org)  
[www.ridgehaven.org](http://www.ridgehaven.org)



### III. PERMANENT COMMITTEES (2022-2023)

#### ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

**CHAIRMAN:** TE Robert Brunson **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE Jerry Schriver  
**SECRETARY:** RE Pat Hodge

#### Class of 2026

TE Michael Dixon, Fellowship

RE Danny McDaniel, Houston Metro

#### Class of 2025

TE Roger G. Collins, Mississippi Valley  
TE Steve Jeantet, Suncoast Florida

RE Richard Dolan, Georgia Foothills

#### Class of 2024

TE Robert F. Brunson, Metro Atlanta

RE Frank Cohee, Providence  
RE Pat Hodge, Calvary

#### Class of 2023

TE Jerry Schriver, Metro Atlanta  
TE Kevin DeYoung, Central Carolina

RE David Nok Daniel, Southern New England

#### Alternates

TE Jon C. Anderson, Blue Ridge

RE Alan Walters, Mississippi Valley

#### Chairman of Committee or Board, or Designate

TE Thomas M. Harr, New Jersey  
Committee on Discipleship Ministries

RE Martin A. Moore, Georgia Foothills  
Covenant College

TE Blake Altman, Hills and Plains  
Mission to North America

TE Brian Habig, Calvary  
Covenant Theological Seminary

TE James Richter, Tennessee Valley  
Mission to the World

TE Martin Wagner, Evangel  
PCA Foundation

TE Jason Sterling, Evangel  
Reformed University Fellowship

RE James W. Wert Jr., Metro Atlanta  
Geneva Benefits

RE Dan Nielsen, Savannah River  
Ridge Haven

**COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES**

**CHAIRMAN:** TE Thomas Michael Harr Jr. **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE W. Scott Barber  
**SECRETARY:** RE Bill Bolling

**Class of 2027**

TE Christopher Lee Hutchings., Ohio

RE Randy Stair, Metro Atlanta  
 RE Taylor Clement, Missouri

**Class of 2026**

TE W. Scott Barber, Providence  
 TE Dean Williams, Mississippi Valley

RE Dan Barber, Central Indiana

**Class of 2025**

TE Thomas Michael Harr Jr., New Jersey

RE Jacob Lightsey Wallace, James River  
 RE Jeremy Whitley, South Texas

**Class of 2024**

TE Charles Johnson, Nashville  
 TE Dave Lindberg, New Jersey

RE Dennis Crowe, Southeast Alabama

**Class of 2023**

TE Danny Kwon, Korean Eastern

RE Bill Bolling, Chesapeake  
 RE Jack Wilkerson, Piedmont Triad

**Alternates**

TE Richard Burguet, Central Florida

RE Aaron Douglas Raines, Hills and Plains

**COMMITTEE ON MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA**

**CHAIRMAN:** TE Blake Altman **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TBD  
**SECRETARY:** RE Eugene Betts

**Class of 2027**

TE Dean Faulkner, Central Carolina  
 TE Hansoo Jin, Korean Capital

RE Timothy Threadgill, Mississippi Valley

**Class of 2026**

TE Roland Barnes, Savannah River

RE Brent Andersen, Central Carolina  
 RE Jason Kang, Metro Atlanta

**Class of 2025**

TE R. Lyle Caswell Jr., Southwest Florida  
 TE Robert A. Willetts, Tidewater

RE Ernie Shipman, Northern New England

**Class of 2024**

TE Robert Penny, Mississippi Valley

RE Keith W. Goben, Pacific Northwest  
 RE Timothy L. Murr, Grace

**Class of 2023**

TE Robert A. Cargo, Metro Atlanta  
 TE Blake A. Altman, Hills and Plains

RE Lance Kinzer, Heartland

**Alternates**

TBD

RE Bruce Wells, Eastern Carolina

**COMMITTEE ON MISSION TO THE WORLD**

**CHAIRMAN:** TE Patrick Womack    **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE James Richter  
**SECRETARY:** TE William Dempsey    **TREASURER:** TE Theodore Hamilton

**Class of 2027**

TE Maranatha Chung, Philadelphia  
 RE Theo Hagg, Westminster

TE Owen Lee, Korean Capital

**Class of 2026**

RE John E. Bateman, North Texas  
 TE Oscar R. Aylor, Eastern Carolina

TE Shaun M. Nolan, Pittsburgh

**Class of 2025**

RE Byron Johnson, Metro Atlanta

TE Brett W. Carl, Tidewater  
 TE William E. Dempsey, Mississippi Valley

**Class of 2024**

RE Daryl Brister, Huston Metro  
 RE Norman Leo Mooney, Missouri

TE James E. Richter, Tennessee Valley

**Class of 2023**

RE Hugh S. Potts, Jr., Mississippi Valley

TE Patrick J. Womack, Suncoast Florida  
 TE Theodore Hamilton, South Coast

**Alternates**

RE David Kliewer, Rocky Mountain

TE Dan Seale, Eastern Carolina

**COMMITTEE ON REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP**

**CHAIRMAN:** TE Jason Sterling    **VICE CHAIRMAN:** RE Charles Duggan  
**SECRETARY:** TE Joshua Martin

**Class of 2027**

RE Justen Ellis, Northwest Georgia

TE Martin Biggs, Hills and Plains  
 TE Eric Zellner, Southeast Alabama

**Class of 2026**

RE Patrick C. Fant III, Calvary  
 RE David Hall, Hills and Plains

TE Iron D. Kim, Northern California

**Class of 2025**

RE Charles Powell Jr., Evangel

TE Joshua A. Martin, Calvary  
 TE David Osborne, Eastern Carolina

**Class of 2024**

RE Charles Duggan III, Central Georgia  
 RE Niles McNeel, Mississippi

TE Hunter M. Bailey, Hills and Plains

**Class of 2023**

RE Michael Martin, Blue Ridge

TE Ben Hurst Porter, Missouri  
 TE Jason Sterling, Evangel

**Alternates**

RE Tobe Hester, Lowcountry

TE Kenneth Foster, Heritage

## IV. AGENCIES

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF COVENANT COLLEGE

**CHAIRMAN:** RE R. Craig Wood    **VICE CHAIRMAN:** RE John Truschel  
**SECRETARY:** TE Robert S. Rayburn    **TREASURER:** RE Martin A. Moore

#### Class of 2026

TE Thomas Groelsema, Central Carolina	RE Don Mellott, Pacific Northwest
TE Lance Lewis, Northern California	RE Gordon Sluis, Mississippi Valley
TE Sean McGowan, Gulf Coast	
TE Omari Hill, Central Carolina	

#### Class of 2025

TE Bradley J. Barnes, Southern New England	RE David Caines, Tennessee Valley
TE Alexander Brown, Savannah River	RE Mark Griggs, Tennessee Valley
TE Irwyn L. Ince Jr., Potomac	RE Bradley M. Harris, Covenant
	RE Drew Jelgerhuis, Great Lakes

#### Class of 2024

TE Matthew David Fray, North Texas	RE Richard T. Bowser, Eastern Carolina
TE Duncan Highmark, Missouri	RE Robert Curtis, Southwest Florida
	RE Martin A. Moore, Georgia Foothills
	RE William H. Ryan, South Florida
	RE Stephen E. Sligh, Southwest Florida

#### Class of 2023

TE William B. Barclay, Central Carolina	RE David Lucas, Suncoast Florida
TE Robert S. Rayburn, Pacific Northwest	RE Bruce W. Terrell, Metro New York
TE Kevin Smith, Tennessee Valley	RE John Truschel, Southern New England
Vacancy	

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
**CHAIRMAN:** RE Miles F. Gresham    **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE Hugh M. Barlett  
**SECRETARY:** RE Frank Wicks

**Class of 2026**

TE Russell St. John, Missouri

RE James Albritton, Evangel  
 RE Doug Hickel, Missouri  
 RE Walter Turner, Pittsburgh

**Class of 2025**

TE Brian Cosby, Tennessee Valley

RE Samuel N. Graham, Covenant  
 RE Miles E. Gresham, Evangel  
 RE Donald Guthrie, Chicago Metro  
 RE Otis Pickett, Mississippi Valley  
 RE Curtis S. Shidemantle, Ascension

**Class of 2024**

TE Hugh M. Barlett, Missouri

RE William Bennett, Evangel  
 RE Jonathan P. Seda, Heritage  
 RE Paul R. Stoll, Chicago Metro  
 RE Gif Thornton, Nashville  
 RE Frank Wicks Jr., Missouri

**Class of 2023**

TE Brian C. Habig, Calvary  
 TE Fredric Ryan Laughlin, Missouri  
 TE Doug Serven, Hills and Plains

RE Brewster Harrington, Rocky Mountain  
 RE Robert B. Hayward Jr., Susq. Valley  
 RE John Plating, Tennessee Valley

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PCA FOUNDATION**  
**CHAIRMAN:** TE Martin Wagner    **VICE CHAIRMAN:** RE W. Russell Trapp  
**SECRETARY:** RE Willis L. Frazer

**Class of 2026**

RE Owen H. Malcolm, Georgia Foothills  
 RE W. Russell Trapp, Providence  
 DE Andrew Schmidt, Central Carolina

**Class of 2025**

TE Martin Wagner, Evangel

RE Willis L. Frazer, Covenant

**Class of 2024**

TE Patrick W. Curles, Southeast Alabama

RE John Alexander, Metro Atlanta  
 RE Rob W. Morton, Central Georgia

**Class of 2023**

TE Robert Bryant, Palmetto

RE William O. Stone Jr., Miss. Valley

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF GENEVA BENEFITS****CHAIRMAN:** RE James W. Wert Jr.    **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE Andrew E. Field**SECRETARY:** TE Jon Medlock    **TREASURER:** RE Chet Lilly**Class of 2026**

TE William Chang, Korean SW Orange Co.

RE Ken Downer, Highlands

RE Chris Rogers, Covenant

**Class of 2025**

TE Roderick Miles, Northern California

RE Paul A. Fullerton, S. New England

RE Scott P. Magnuson, Pittsburgh

**Class of 2024**

TE Andrew E. Field, Metropolitan NY

RE Ryan Bailey, Metro Atlanta

DE Theodore J. Dankovich, Calvary

**Class of 2023**

RE S.E. Cody Dick, Houston Metro

RE Keith Passwater, Central Indiana

RE James W. Wert Jr., Metro Atlanta

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF RIDGE HAVEN****PRESIDENT:** RE Dan Nielsen    **VICE PRESIDENT:** TE James Andrew White**SECRETARY/TREASURER:** TE David Sasser Hall**Class of 2027**

TE David Sasser Hall, Fellowship

TE Richard Smith, Susquehanna Valley

**Class of 2026**

RE Art Fox, North Florida

RE Ellison Smith, Pee Dee

**Class of 2025**

TE Larry Doughan, Iowa

RE John Randall Berger, Eastern Carolina

**Class of 2024**

TE David Hart Sanders, Pee Dee

RE Pete Austin IV, Tennessee Valley

**Class of 2023**

TE J. Andrew White, Westminster

RE Dan Nielsen, Savannah River

**V. SPECIAL COMMITTEES****THEOLOGICAL EXAMINING COMMITTEE**  
**CHAIRMAN:** RE Richard Leino      **SECRETARY:****Class of 2025**

TE Guy Richard, Metro Atlanta

RE KJ Drake, Eastern Canada

**Class of 2024**

TE Bruce Baugus, Mississippi Valley

RE Edward Currie, Mississippi Valley

**Class of 2023**

TE P. Clay Holland, Houston Metro

RE Richard E. Leino, James River

**Alternates**

TE Kevin Carr, Siouxslands

RE Joshua Torrey, South Texas

**COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL BUSINESS****CHAIRMAN:** TE Larry Hoop      **SECRETARY:** TE Joel St. Clair**Class of 2026**

TE Jason Piland, Ohio

RE Bryce Sullivan, Nashville

**Class of 2025**

TE J. Scott Phillips, Mississippi Valley

RE Matt Fender, James River

**Class of 2024**

TE Joel Craig St. Clair II, Potomac

RE Fredric Marcinak, Calvary

**Class of 2023**

TE Larry C. Hoop, Ohio Valley

RE Edward L. Wright, Chesapeake

**Alternates**

TE Robert D. Cathcart Jr., Calvary

RE Chris Shoemaker, Southern New England

**COMMITTEE ON INTERCHURCH RELATIONS****CHAIRMAN:** TE L. Roy Taylor      **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE E. Marvin Padgett  
**SECRETARY:** RE James Walters**Class of 2025**

TE Wallace Tinsley, Fellowship

RE Billy Ball, Evangel

**Class of 2024**

TE L. Roy Taylor, Georgia Foothills

RE James Isbell, Tennessee Valley

**Class of 2023**

TE Elmer Marvin Padgett Jr., Nashville

RE James D. Walters Jr., Calvary

**Alternate**

TE David Gilleran, Blue Ridge

RE Dennis Watts, Mississippi Valley

**Ex-Officio Member**

TE Bryan Chapell, Northern Illinois

## VI. STANDING JUDICIAL COMMISSION

**CHAIRMAN:** RE Jack Wilson   **VICE CHAIRMAN:** RE Samuel Duncan  
**SECRETARY:** RE Howie Donahoe   **ASST. SECRETARY:** TE Fred Greco

### Class of 2026

TE Art Sartorius, Siouxlands	RE James Eggert, Southwest Florida
TE Fred Greco, Houston Metro	RE John Bise, Providence
TE Guy Prentiss Waters, Mississippi Valley	RE John Pickering, Evangel

### Class of 2025

TE Paul L. Bankson, Central Georgia	RE Steve Dowling, Southeast Alabama
TE David F. Coffin Jr., Potomac	RE Frederick Neikirk, Ascension
TE Paul D. Kooistra, Warrior	RE R. Jackson Wilson, Georgia Foothills

### Class of 2024

TE Hoochan Paul Lee, Korean Northeastern	RE Howie Donahoe, Pacific Northwest
TE Sean M. Lucas, Covenant	RE Melton Ledford Duncan, Calvary
TE Michael F. Ross, Columbus Metro	RE Samuel J. Duncan, Grace

### Class of 2023

TE David Garner, Philadelphia Metro West	RE Daniel A. Carrell, James River
TE Carl F. Ellis Jr., Tennessee Valley	RE Bruce W. Terrell, Metropolitan NY
TE Charles E. McGowan, Nashville	RE John B. White Jr., Metro Atlanta

### Clerk of the Commission

TE Bryan Chapell, Northern Illinois



**REPORT OF APPOINTEES TO COMMITTEES OF COMMISSIONERS**  
for the 50th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America  
**Odd-Numbered Presbyteries – DUE April 14, 2023**

Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_ Attested by: \_\_\_\_\_

Presbytery Clerk

**Teaching Elders**

COMMITTEE	Commissioner Name	Email	Church Name (with City, ST)
Administration			
Discipleship Ministries			
Covenant Theological Seminary			
Interchurch Relations			
Mission to North America			
PCA Foundation			

**Ruling Elders**

COMMITTEE	Commissioner Name	Email	Church Name (with City, ST)
Covenant College			
Geneva Benefits			
Mission to the World			
Ridge Haven			
Reformed University Fellowship			

**Overtures**

Elder Type	Commissioner Name	Email	Church Name (with City, ST)
Ruling Elder			
Teaching Elder			

Return to [hharrison@pcanet.org](mailto:hharrison@pcanet.org), or mail to PCA AC, 1700 N. Brown Rd. Ste. 105, Lawrenceville, GA 30043

**REPORT OF APPOINTEES TO COMMITTEES OF COMMISSIONERS**  
for the 50<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America  
**Even-Numbered Presbyteries – DUE April 14, 2023**

Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_ Attested by: \_\_\_\_\_

Presbytery Clerk

**Ruling Elders**

COMMITTEE	Commissioner Name	Email	Church Name (with City, ST)
Administration			
Discipleship Ministries			
Covenant Theological Seminary			
Interchurch Relations			
Mission to North America			
PCA Foundation			

**Teaching Elders**

COMMITTEE	Commissioner Name	Email	Church Name (with City, ST)
Covenant College			
Geneva Benefits			
Mission to the World			
Ridge Haven			
Reformed University Fellowship			

**Overtures**

Elder Type	Commissioner Name	Email	Church Name (with City, ST)
Ruling Elder			
Teaching Elder			

Return to [hharrison@pcanet.org](mailto:hharrison@pcanet.org), or mail to PCA AC 1700 N. Brown Rd. Ste. 105, Lawrenceville, GA 30043

**RULES AND FORMULA FOR APPOINTMENT  
TO COMMITTEES OF COMMISSIONERS AND THE OVERTURES COMMITTEE**

Regarding the Committees of Commissioners, RAO 14-2 reads as follows:

- 14-2.** Each presbytery shall, prior to the meeting of the Assembly, elect one of its commissioners to each of these committees of commissioners (cf. 14-1), dividing them as to ruling and teaching elders by a formula established by the Stated Clerk. In the event that presbytery does not have sufficient teaching elders to supply the committees thus assigned, the presbytery may, at its own discretion, elect ruling elders to these committees (or vice versa, may elect teaching elders for insufficient ruling elders). In the event that presbytery is not able to supply members for all the committees, the presbytery may select the committees to which they wish to appoint representatives. Commissioners serving on permanent Committees or Agencies or sub-committees of the Assembly or the staffs thereof are not eligible to serve on any of these committees of commissioners. For the purpose of defining those ineligible for service in committees of commissioners, permanent Committee or Agency “staff” is to be understood as persons required to be examined by the Theological Examining Committee (BCO 14-1.12.) and all permanent Committee and Agency support personnel. All commissioners should bear in mind *Robert’s Rules of Order* regarding abstaining from voting on a question of direct personal interest (RRO § 45).

Regarding the Overtures Committee, RAO 15-2 reads as follows:

- 15-2.** Each presbytery shall, prior to the meeting of each General Assembly, elect to the Overtures Committee one teaching elder and one ruling elder from among its registered commissioners to the General Assembly. Unless approved by a two thirds (2/3) vote of his presbytery, no commissioner shall serve on the Overtures Committee for more than two (2) consecutive Assemblies. It is recommended that, where necessary, the presbytery underwrite the expenses of its representatives to the Overtures Committee.

**NOTE:** Members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee, the Review of Presbytery Records Committee and the Standing Judicial Commission are eligible to serve on Committees of Commissioners.

**Even-Numbered Presbyteries**

(Use Form 065)

- |                        |                          |                             |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2. Gulf Coast          | 36. Korean Eastern       | 66. Houston Metro           |
| 4. Central Georgia     | 38. Palmetto             | 68. Suncoast Florida        |
| 6. South Florida       | 40. Southeast Alabama    | 70. Chicago Metro           |
| 8. Calvary             | 42. Korean Southeastern  | 72. Canada West             |
| 10. Mississippi Valley | 44. Korean Southern      | 74. Philadelphia Metro West |
| 12. Evangel            | 46. South Coast          | 76. Georgia Foothills       |
| 14. Tennessee Valley   | 48. Potomac              | 78. Providence              |
| 16. Pacific            | 50. Rocky Mountain       | 80. Central Indiana         |
| 20. Central Florida    | 52. Korean Northwest     | 82. Korean Northeastern     |
| 22. Eastern Carolina   | 54. Pittsburgh           | 84. Korean Southwest OC     |
| 24. Philadelphia       | 56. Nashville            | 86. Lowcountry              |
| 26. Heritage           | 58. North Florida        | 88. Hills and Plains        |
| 28. Great Lakes        | 60. Southern New England | 90. West Hudson             |
| 30. New Jersey         | 62. Ohio Valley          |                             |
| 34. Missouri           | 64. Iowa                 |                             |

**Elect RULING Elders to –**

1. Administration
2. Discipleship Ministries
4. Covenant Seminary
6. Interchurch Relations
7. Mission to North America
9. PCA Foundation

**Elect TEACHING Elders to –**

3. Covenant College
5. Geneva Benefits
8. Mission to the World
10. Ridge Haven
11. Reformed University Fellowship

**Odd-Numbered Presbyteries**

(Use Form 064)

- |                          |                           |                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Warrior               | 33. Pacific Northwest     | 65. Blue Ridge        |
| 3. Westminster           | 35. Northern Illinois     | 67. Savannah River    |
| 5. Metro Atlanta         | 37. Korean Southwest      | 69. Gulfstream        |
| 7. Covenant              | 39. South Texas           | 71. Wisconsin         |
| 9. Grace                 | 41. Korean Central        | 73. Eastern           |
| 11. North Texas          | 43. Susquehanna Valley    | 75. Pennsylvania      |
| 13. James River          | 45. Heartland             | 77. Northwest Georgia |
| 15. Highlands            | 47. Northern California   | 79. Platte Valley     |
| 17. New River            | 49. Southwest Florida     | 81. Ohio              |
| 19. Ascension            | 51. Korean Capital        | 83. Catawba Valley    |
| 21. Central Carolina     | 53. Southeast Louisiana   | 85. Tidewater         |
| 23. Arizona              | 55. Fellowship            | 87. Pee Dee           |
| 25. Siouxlands           | 57. Metropolitan New York | 89. Columbus Metro    |
| 27. Eastern Canada       | 59. New York State        |                       |
| 29. Illiana              | 61. Piedmont Triad        |                       |
| 31. Northern New England | 63. Chesapeake            |                       |

**Elect TEACHING Elders to –**

1. Administration
2. Discipleship Ministries
4. Covenant Seminary
6. Interchurch Relations
7. Mission to North America
9. PCA Foundation

**Elect RULING Elders to –**

3. Covenant College
5. Geneva Benefits
8. Mission to the World
10. Ridge Haven
11. Reformed University Fellowship

**REPORT OF APPOINTEES**  
**FLOOR CLERK & COMMUNION ELDER**  
 50th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America  
 Due to Stated Clerk's Office by May 23, 2023

Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_ Attested by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Presbytery Clerk

**You may also submit your Floor Clerk and Communion Elder appointments online:**  
<https://pcaga.org/resources/#volunteer>

**Communion Elder:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, ST, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Floor Clerk:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, ST, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, ST, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** If every presbytery will fulfill its responsibility to supply one floor clerk for the General Assembly, the work will be less burdensome for everyone. If your presbytery can provide more than one floor clerk, it would be greatly appreciated.

The floor clerk needs to be available for the whole time of business up to adjournment. He ***MUST*** be present at the briefing for floor clerks on the first day of General Assembly (the time will be printed in the docket).

Submit online at link above or email [hharrison@pcanet.org](mailto:hharrison@pcanet.org).

## FLOOR CLERKS – SELECTING AND JOB DESCRIPTION

### PRESBYTERY GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING FLOOR CLERKS

We are grateful to God for the dramatic growth of our denomination over the years. This expansion affects the number of individuals attending General Assembly, and Assembly logistics are complicated. We require larger venues and increased ancillary services to accomplish our business within severe time restraints and in the face of a burgeoning agenda. Agencies, organizations, and committees present us with a profusion of information, many of which call for immediate and significant action.

No other component of Assembly operation exemplifies the effect of this complexity and expansion as much as the work of the floor clerks. As committee work intensifies and the Assembly faces volumes of reports and print materials, we experience an increased dependency on these volunteers. In the absence of reliable, punctual, patient and versatile clerks, the work of the Assembly would grind to a painful halt.

By the mercies of God, many men have stepped forward to participate, selflessly and cheerfully, in this service to the Body of Christ. The Assembly has consistently recognized the crucial role of the floor clerks and has often expressed appreciation to them. Our Presbyteries play a key role in maintaining this level of excellence and service.

Consider the following guidelines in soliciting volunteers to serve as floor clerks:

1. Floor clerks are requested, and strongly urged, to attend the pre-Assembly Orientation on Tuesday prior to the opening of the Assembly. If it were practical, this would be a requirement.
  - a. During this the meeting, assignments are finalized. If volunteers do not attend this meeting, there is no way to know who will actually show up for the Assembly. Following this meeting, efforts (often frantic) are made to contact additional volunteers to take the place of those who have not reported. When the Assembly convenes and “surprise” volunteers arrive, we must decide to either repeat the orientation under the pressure of opening day urgencies or excuse the late arrivals. Unless there is a severe shortage of floor clerks, they are generally asked to be available to serve in the absence of another floor clerk. This results in volunteers feeling underappreciated and the gives the impression that we have too many clerks (a truly rare occurrence).
  - b. Should a floor clerk be unable to attend Orientation, the volunteer should contact the Floor Clerk Coordinators and arrange for an alternative training time. This facilitates assignments and lets the Coordinators know whom to expect when the Assembly convenes.
2. Presbyteries occasionally send multiple volunteers to share or rotate one Floor Clerk position. We would prefer to discourage this practice. The process of keeping track of who has rotated into a particular floor clerk position is simply too complex when tracking 30+ clerk positions. The Floor Clerk Organizers may permit sharing in a reasonable and logistically practicable format. Such volunteers will be required to report to the Floor Clerk Coordinators and use a sign-in sheet.
3. Volunteers should attend, on time, every session of the Assembly. This is particularly crucial when a manual or paper count of votes is required. If clerks are absent, the voting process is difficult and may even be compromised.
4. Some Presbyteries have considered financial assistance for those serving as floor clerks. We support this concept and are willing to cooperate with the Presbytery in terms of feedback or other arrangements as requested. If the Presbytery informs the Coordinators of such an arrangement, priority assignments will be made to insure that the volunteer will have the opportunity to serve. Note that it is not required that these arrangements between the Presbytery and the volunteers be divulged to the Floor Clerk Coordinators.

## JOB DESCRIPTION FOR FLOOR CLERK

### SUMMARY OUTLINE

- I. Duties
  - A. Distribute Paper
  - B. Assist Moderator
  - C. Assist with Voting
- II. Methodologies
  - A. Responsible Attendance
  - B. Manageable Units
  - C. Provided by Presbyteries

Floor clerks perform essentially three tasks: distribution of handouts on the floor of the GA, responding to the direction of the Moderator and assisting, when called upon, in the tallying of votes.

**Distribution of Paper** - It is impossible for commissioners at General Assembly to follow the discussion and vote responsibly without having the material in hand. Most work comes to the floor through Committees of Commissioners, and most do not meet until just before the Assembly begins. Their reports are distributed in digital format and in paper format as the Assembly is meeting. Distributing the paper materials by the floor clerks in a timely fashion is essential to the functioning of the body.

**Assist Moderator** - Occasionally, the Moderator will direct the floor clerks to accomplish some task necessary for business. The Head Floor Clerks will direct the floor clerks to affect the direction of the Moderator. Willingness and cooperation of the floor clerks is very important for the duration of the General Assembly.

**Assist with Voting** - When opinions on issues are closely divided it becomes necessary to divide the house and count the vote. Recently the Assembly has implemented an electronic voting system. The floor clerks serve as a back-up to this system in the event that a manual count becomes necessary. Full attendance by the floor clerks at each session of the Assembly is essential to ensure an accurate count.

Additionally, there are some votes which may require a paper ballot at the discretion of the Moderator or the body. Floor clerks are trained to provide this option when necessary. It is of interest to note that divisions of upwards of one thousand have been decided by ten or fewer votes. This points to the necessity for accuracy in counting and the importance of dependable attendance by the floor clerks as these divisions may be called quite unexpectedly.

**Responsible Attendance** - If an earthly king's business is "urgent" (I Samuel 21:8) then God's is very much so. Floor clerks must be ready, willing and diligent whenever their services are needed, to ensure that the deliberations and decisions of His church are given the best attention possible. They must be at their assigned station in the meeting hall at all times during the transaction of business. They must also confer with the Head Floor Clerk in the event that they must be absent from the floor at any time.

**Manageable Units** - For efficient distribution of paper, the floor is divided into the small units and assigned by the Head Floor Clerks to be served by individual floor clerks. To ensure reasonable coverage, clerks need to take care of their assigned section. This minimizes pauses in the conduct of

business while missed areas await the report of the moment. Of course, there will be latecomers that inflict the irritations of their habits on the whole body--such failures are not the clerks' fault but he may be able to alleviate some of the irritation. Floor clerks should try to be alert to latecomers, if possible, and help reduce the turmoil in the aisles.

**Provided by Presbyteries** - If every Presbytery provided one clerk, there would be more than enough to meet the needs of the Assembly. In addition to distributing paper or assisting with voting some floor clerks are needed to organize boxes of arriving paper, to organize the extra copies of materials which have already been distributed and/or to assist with other necessary "behind the scenes" tasks. By the Grace of our Loving Father, we have always had sufficient volunteers to serve as floor clerks, though many graciously serve multiple functions and are willing to go out of their way to help with whatever needs to be done. It would be a great blessing for each Presbytery to provide at least one volunteer. Some presbyteries provide more than one floor clerk, and it is greatly appreciated.

The task of floor clerking is needed and an obvious way we can explore Jesus' assertion that the way to greatness in His kingdom is by servanthood.



## Nominations Process Overview

This document provides a brief overview of the nominations process, forms, and nomenclature (including some helpful tips). This is only an overview – for specific rules or guidance, please refer to the Nominating Committee Manual, the appropriate sections of the BCO and RAO, or ask the Stated Clerk's Office.

**First** – download the Nominations materials and forms from our website:

<http://www.pcaac.org/presbyterydownloads/>

-You may download forms individually, but if you are in charge of nominations in your presbytery, you may find it helpful to download the complete nominations packet in a zip file.

-If you download the Zip File called “YEAR Fall Nominations Packet”, you should be able to find the following helpful folders and files:

**-Appointees to Nominating Committee and RPR:** Appointments are for three years, and the class year is held by the presbytery (not the individual). So if your presbytery is in the class of 2022, but you don't have someone currently serving on RPR, if you appoint them this year, they would only serve this year before their term expires.

-Files 055 and 056 show the current appointments to both NC and RPR, and the class year and elder type for your presbytery.

-If you wish to appoint someone, or to change an existing appointment, you'll need to fill out form 053 and return it by the deadline.

**-Nominations to Permanent Committees:** These members are nominated by the presbytery, reviewed by the Nominating Committee and selected for a slate presented to the General Assembly. There is an opportunity for floor nominations at General Assembly, and then these members are elected to serve a multi-year term (length dependent on the particular committee or board).

-063 GA Directory is the complete directory of all the permanent committees. If you are not sure who from your presbytery is serving on a General Assembly-level committee, this is where to check.

-Each presbytery is able to nominate one RE and one TE to each of the permanent committees. These nominations must be submitted by the deadline. The presbytery must turn in form 059, and each individual must turn in form 060. This deadline is a hard deadline for these forms, and no late forms are accepted.

-Alternates are automatically re-nominated unless the member does not wish to serve again.

-Special circumstances for consideration:

-You may nominate a Deacon to serve on the Boards of GENEVA and the PCA Foundation.

-Each presbytery may have only one member on the SJC. If your presbytery already has a member serving, you may not nominate an elder to the SJC.

**-Committee of Commissioners:**

-Each presbytery may appoint one commissioner to each Committee of Commissioners. CoCs only serve for one year – at General Assembly. Your presbytery’s “number” indicates which type of elder you should appoint to each CoC (for example, if you are an even numbered presbytery, you should use form 065 to turn in your appointments). For these appointments, late appointments often arise. If you find out someone is attending GA after that date and would like to serve, please email us their info, or an updated form, and we will add them to the roster.

**-Helpful Hints:**

**-Class Years end at General Assembly.** So if your term ends in 2020, you would serve through the General Assembly of 2020, and at the end of the Assembly, you would roll off.

**-Appointments vs. Nominations** – Presbyteries APPOINT members to Nominating Committee, RPR, and Committees of Commissioners. This means each presbytery may have representation on each of these committees, and once your presbytery APPOINTS the member, they begin serving immediately – no further steps are needed.

Presbyteries NOMINATE members to General Assembly level permanent committees (such as MTW’s Committee, the Interchurch Relations Committee, and the Standing Judicial Commission). These members are NOMINATED by their presbytery, must fill out a bio form, and are reviewed by the Nominating Committee. A slate is selected and then elected by the General Assembly. Not every presbytery is represented on every committee.

**-GA Postponement Class Year Reminder:**

-Because General Assembly was postponed in 2020, the class years for everyone serving at that time were increased by one year. That meant if you were in the class of 2023, you are now in the class of 2024. This also applied to presbytery appointments to Nominating Committee and RPR – if your presbytery was in the class of 2021, it is now in the class of 2022. Please pay extra attention to your nominations and appointments this year as these formulas may change the way your presbytery handles appointments.

## Practicing Church Discipline

L. Roy Taylor  
Stated Clerk Emeritus, PCA

The ecumenical creeds speak of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Arising from the Reformation, Reformed Churches have held that the marks of the Church should include the faithful preaching of the Word, the proper administration of the sacraments and the practice of biblical discipline.<sup>1</sup>

The history of denominations since the Reformation has proven that theological decline and the neglect of discipline often go hand in hand. The history of mainline denominations tends to involve three factors;

1. Theological decline (an erosion of biblical authority and a resultant dissimulation regarding doctrinal standards).
2. Neglect of discipline (both morally and theologically).
3. Abuse of ecclesiastical power (no matter what the church polity, any system may be abused and manipulated). Often that means that those who need to be disciplined are not, and those who are orthodox are persecuted.

The story line is the same; only the cast of characters and time frames are different.

**Discipline (*disciplina*), from the earliest days of the Church, is training in the Christian way of life, not just judicial process.**

Discipline involves;

- Discipleship, training Christians to follow a biblical lifestyle, a Christian perspective and practice in all areas of life, loving obedience to the law of Christ (Matt. 28:16-20);
- Informal pastoral discipline BCO 27-1 a.; 38-4
- Formal judicial process. BCO 27-1 b.

Discipline in Presbyterian Church Government. The Presbyterian system of church government is a *biblical, representative, and connectional* system.<sup>2</sup> We practice discipline because it is

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<sup>1</sup> See Calvin, Institutes IV, 12.1; Second Helvetic Confession, 1566; Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England, XXXIII, 1563; Irish Articles of Religion, 1615, sec. 73; Westminster Confession, Ch. XXX, 1647; Savoy Declaration, 1658; London Baptist Confession, 1689, ch. 26.12

<sup>2</sup> Presbyterians do not believe that they are the only Christians, or that Churches with other types of Church Government are not valid Christian Churches. Presbyterians do believe, however, that the Presbyterian, biblical, representative and connectional system is that which conforms most consistently with the Scriptures. Presbyterian Church Government is *biblical* because it is based on biblical directives and principles drawn from both the Old and New Testaments (not just the New Testament). The historical development of Church Government is informative, but not determinative for us. Both our form of government and our theology are based on the entire Bible. Presbyterian Church Government is *representative* because the people choose their spiritual leaders to govern the Church (its members and officers) on the local, regional, and national levels. We practice mutual accountability and discipline through our representative government. Presbyterian Church Government is *connectional*; local churches see themselves as part of the larger Church. We hold to a common binding doctrinal, confessional standard of the Reformed Faith, the *Westminster Standards*. Local churches, no matter what size they may be, do not minister best alone, but in cooperation with the larger Church. We engage in cooperative ministry as a body of churches to carry out the Great Commission Christ gave to the Church.

biblical, because it is the responsibility of elders and because the act of one court of the church is to be recognized by the other courts of the church.

**Discipline is important and necessary.**

- The Westminster Assembly produced the Westminster Standards, a Form of Government and a Directory of Worship. The FOG included disciplinary procedures.
- The BCO has three sections (Form of Government, Rules of Discipline, and Directory of Worship).
- The first General Assembly (1789) included some Preliminary Principles to the first American BCO, several of which deal with discipline.<sup>3</sup>

**BCO 27-3.** The exercise of discipline is highly important and necessary. In its proper usage discipline maintains:

- 
- <sup>3</sup> 1. God alone is Lord of the conscience and has left it free from any doctrines or commandments of men (a) which are in any respect contrary to the Word of God, or (b) which, in regard to matters of faith and worship, are not governed by the Word of God. Therefore, the rights of private judgment in all matters that respect religion are universal and inalienable. No religious constitution should be supported by the civil power further than may be necessary for protection and security equal and common to all others.
  2. In perfect consistency with the above principle, every Christian Church, or union or association of particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ has appointed. In the exercise of this right it may, notwithstanding, err in making the terms of communion either too lax or too narrow; yet even in this case, it does not infringe upon the liberty or the rights of others, but only makes an improper use of its own.
  3. Our blessed Saviour, for the edification of the visible Church, which is His body, has appointed officers not only to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, but also to exercise discipline for the preservation both of truth and duty. It is incumbent upon these officers and upon the whole Church in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous, observing in all cases the rules contained in the Word of God.
  4. Godliness is founded on truth. A test of truth is its power to promote holiness according to our Saviour's rule, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). No opinion can be more pernicious or more absurd than that which brings truth and falsehood upon the same level.  
On the contrary, there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise it would be of no consequence either to discover truth or to embrace it.
  5. While, under the conviction of the above principle, it is necessary to make effective provision that all who are admitted as teachers be sound in the faith, there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good character and principles may differ. In all these it is the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other.
  6. Though the character, qualifications and authority of church officers are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method of officer investiture, the power to elect persons to the exercise of authority in any particular society resides in that society.
  7. All church power, whether exercised by the body in general, or by representation, is only ministerial and declarative since the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice. No church judicatory may make laws to bind the conscience. All church courts may err through human frailty, yet it rests upon them to uphold the laws of Scripture though this obligation be lodged with fallible men.
  8. Since ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral or spiritual in its object, and not attended with any civil effects, it can derive no force whatever, but from its own justice, the approbation of an impartial public, and the countenance and blessing of the great Head of the Church.

If the preceding scriptural principles be steadfastly adhered to, the vigor and strictness of government and discipline, applied with pastoral prudence and Christian love, will contribute to the glory and well-being of the Church.

- a. the glory of God,
- b. the purity of His Church,
- c. the keeping and reclaiming of disobedient sinners. Discipline is for the purpose of godliness (1 Timothy 4:7); therefore, it demands a self-examination under Scripture.

Its ends, so far as it involves judicial action, are the rebuke of offenses, the removal of scandal, the vindication of the honor of Christ, the promotion of the purity and general edification of the Church, and the spiritual good of offenders themselves.

**Elders, acting in plurality, are responsible to exercise discipline.**

- The office of elder originated in the OT (Numbers 11).
- The office of elder was expanded by the development of the synagogue system after the destruction of the First Temple (585 B.C). Part of the role of a senate of elders in a local synagogue was to exercise discipline.
- The office of elder was carried over into the NT Paul ordained elders in every city (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5), a plurality of elders in each congregation (Acts 11:30; 13:1; 14:23; 15:2; 16:4; 20:17, 28; 21:18; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:1-2; 4:14; Titus 1:5; Jas. 5:14; I Pet. 5:1-2; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24).
- The Council of Jerusalem is the *locus classicus* of Presbyterian polity in operation (Acts 15).<sup>4</sup>
- The terms used to describe the role of elder all specify or imply the office of elder to be an office of spiritual authority.<sup>5</sup>
- Discipline is part of the work of elders (I Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17)
- The congregational vows taken at the ordination of ruling elders include submission to their authority (BCO 24-6).<sup>6</sup>
- The congregational vow taken at the installation of a pastor specifically mentions submission to him in the exercise of discipline (BCO 21-6, Q. 2).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> A single church appealed to the larger Church to settle a dispute (Acts 15:2, 22). Authority was shared by a plurality of elders, vv. 6, 22-23). The decision of the assembly was the decision of the whole Church (v. 22). The decision of the assembly was a binding confessional standard, vv. 23, 30; 16: 4).

<sup>5</sup> Elder (presbuteros), Acts 11:30; I Tim. 5:17; overseer, bishop (episkopos) I Tim. 3:1-2; Acts 20:28; leader, or governor, Heb. 13:7, 17, 24 [the *Westminster Form of Government* referred to Ruling Elders as “Church Governors”]; shepherd, Acts 20:28, Eph. 4:11; I Pet. 5:2; teacher Eph. 4:11; steward (a servant with delegated responsibility), Titus 1:7; parent, I Tim. 3:4-5.

<sup>6</sup> The ruling elder or deacon elect having answered in the affirmative, the minister shall address to the members of the church the following question:

**Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this brother as a ruling elder (or deacon), and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord to which his office, according to the Word of God and the Constitution of this Church, entitles him?**

The members of the church having answered this question in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the candidate shall then be set apart, with prayer by the minister or any other Session member and the laying on of the hands of the Session, to the office of ruling elder (or deacon). Prayer being ended, the members of the Session (and the deacons, if the case be that of a deacon) shall take the newly ordained officer by the hand, saying in words to this effect:

**We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this office with us.**

The minister shall then say:

**I now pronounce and declare that \_\_\_\_\_ has been regularly elected, ordained and installed a ruling elder (or deacon) in this church, agreeable to the Word of God, and according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America; and that as such he is entitled to all encouragement, honor and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.**

There are several prerequisites that need to be in place in order for discipline to be effective.

- Church members must value the fellowship of the Church. This should involve true fellowship (κοινωνία, Acts 2:42), not just formal affiliation. So churches must develop genuine fellowship.
- Church members must value the privilege of receiving the sacrament of communion as a means of grace (I Cor. 10:16).
- Office bearers must hold in high esteem the privilege of being office bearers in the Church. (President Woodrow Wilson considered the highest honor in his life to have been his being a Presbyterian elder).
- Members need to be informed of the possibility of discipline when joining the church.
  - One of the vows of membership is to submit to the government and discipline of the church (BCO 57-5, Q. 5).
  - Some sessions consider it wise not only to record in the sessional minutes but also have new members sign the membership vows and the clerk of session keep the signed applications on file.
  - Office-bearers additionally vow to submit to their brethren in Lord (BCO 21-5, Q 4; 24-5, Q. 5)
- Judicial process needs to major offenses. In order for a member or officer of the PCA to be charged and tried there must be an allegation of a chargeable offense. "Chargeable offenses" (BCO 29-1 through 4),<sup>8</sup> are "violations of divine law," or doctrines or practices contrary to the Word of God, or the Constitution of the Church. The Constitution of the Church is the *Book of Church Order, The Westminster Confession of Faith, the Westminster Larger Catechism*.
  - Errors of judgment and relational failures may or may not rise to the level of a chargeable offense.
  - In the case of a local church member, a chargeable offense could be a violation of membership vows (BCO 57-5).
  - In the case of a Ruling Elder or Deacon a chargeable offense could be a violation of his ordination vows (BCO 24-6).
  - In the case of a Minister a chargeable offense could be a violation of his ordination vows (BCO 21-5).

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<sup>7</sup> **2. Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?**

<sup>8</sup> **29-1.** An offense, the proper object of judicial process, is anything in the doctrines or practice of a Church member professing faith in Christ which is contrary to the Word of God. The *Confession of Faith* and the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms* of the Westminster Assembly, together with the formularies of government, discipline, and worship are accepted by the Presbyterian Church in America as standard expositions of the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice. Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by any court as an offense, or admitted as a matter of accusation, which cannot be proved to be such from Scripture.

**29-2.** Offenses are either personal or general, private or public; but all of them being sins against God, are therefore grounds of discipline.

**29-3.** Personal offenses are violations of the divine law, considered in the special relation of wrongs or injuries to particular individuals. General offenses are heresies or immoralities having no such relation, or considered apart from it.

**29-4.** Private offenses are those which are known only to a few persons. Public offenses are those which are notorious.

- Judicial process should be used only after discipleship and informal pastoral discipline have failed.
- Church discipline needs to be exercised consistently not selectively.
- Church leaders need to be willing to discipline friends, relatives, allies, and “nice people.”
- All PCA church courts are to recognize the discipline of other PCA church courts (BCO 11-4).
- Other churches need to recognize discipline across denominational lines. The North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) has such an agreement; some local evangelical ministerial associations do as well. But joining another denomination is often used to avoid discipline.

### **Other factors in practicing discipline:**

- Discipline should be exercised with humility, seriousness, discretion, self-examination, tenderness and meekness (Gal. 6:1-5; BCO 32-12; 36-1).
- The exercise of wisdom and discretion are necessary in discipline.
  - When reading the Book of Proverbs some individual proverbs may seem to conflict with others. But the key to understanding Proverbs (and the entire Bible) is that the appropriate action may vary. For example it is unwise rebuke a person who is in a fit of anger. But it is wise and appropriate to rebuke a brother, i.e. someone with whom one has a personal relationship.
  - “Exhort” (παρακαλέω, call along side, call near, call for [a purpose]) may be either to rebuke or to encourage.<sup>9</sup> Sometimes we need to encourage people; sometimes we need to confront people.
  - There is the creative tension in the scripture between justice and righteousness on the one hand and mercy and grace on the other.
  - Part of the uniqueness of PCA polity is that:
    - The BCO is not written as canon law attempting to cover all details of possible situations, but to a large degree is written as a set of principles,
    - Judicial decisions in the PCA do not establish legal precedent as in the US court system.<sup>10</sup>
    - “Deliverances” (study committee reports, and other actions) of the General Assembly do not establish precedent (BCO 14-7).
    - There is no procedure for an “authoritative interpretation of the BCO” in the PCA to establish a precedent.
    - PCA polity gives discretion to the lower courts as a matter of principle and of specific statement (BCO 39-3).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Acts 2:40; 11:23; 14:22; 15:32; Ro. 12:8; 2 Cor. 9:5; I Thess. 2:11; 2 Thess. 3:12; I Tim. 2:1; 6:2; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9; 2:6; 2:15; Heb. 3:13; 13:22.

<sup>10</sup> **14-7.** Actions of the General Assembly pursuant to the provision of *BCO* 14-6 such as deliverances, resolutions, overtures, and judicial decisions are to be given due and serious consideration by the Church and its lower courts when deliberating matters related to such action. Judicial decisions shall be binding and conclusive on the parties who are directly involved in the matter being adjudicated, and may be appealed to in subsequent similar cases as to any principle which may have been decided. (See *BCO* 3-5 and 6, and *WCF* 31:3.)

<sup>11</sup> **39-3.** While affirming that the Scripture is “the supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined” (*WCF* 1.10), and that the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America is “subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the inerrant Word of God” (*BCO* Preface, III), and while affirming also that this Constitution is fallible (*WCF* 31.3), the Presbyterian Church in America affirms that this subordinate and

- Courts are given discretion on the manner (private or public) in which censures are to be inflicted (BCO 36).
- Restoration from discipline may be celebrated (BCO 37).<sup>12</sup>
- Some sins, errors, and behaviors, though not excusable are explainable.
- The abuse of ecclesiastical power is a constant temptation.<sup>13</sup>
- Follow specified procedures in BCO carefully (see Judicial Procedures check list attached).
- Care should be taken in disciplining women particularly in marital situations. Some sessions have a woman sit in on meetings of the court to encourage and advise a woman who may be dealt with officially by the session.
- Ordained office bearers are held to higher standards (BCO 24-7; 34-2).
- Ministers are held to the highest standard (e.g. BCO 34-7, 8, 9).<sup>14</sup>

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fallible Constitution has been “adopted by the church” (*BCO* Preface, III) “as standard expositions of the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice” (*BCO* 29-1) and as setting forth a form of government and discipline “in conformity with the general principles of biblical polity” (*BCO* 21-5.3). To insure that this Constitution is not amended, violated or disregarded in judicial process, any review of the judicial proceedings of a lower court by a higher court shall be guided by the following principles:

1. A higher court, reviewing a lower court, should limit itself to the issues raised by the parties to the case in the original (lower) court. Further, the higher court should resolve such issues by applying the Constitution of the church, as previously established through the constitutional process.
2. A higher court should ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court regarding those factual matters which the lower court is more competent to determine, because of its proximity to the events in question, and because of its personal knowledge and observations of the parties and witnesses involved. Therefore, a higher court should not reverse a factual finding of a lower court, unless there is clear error on the part of the lower court.
3. A higher court should ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court regarding those matters of discretion and judgment which can only be addressed by a court with familiar acquaintance of the events and parties. Such matters of discretion and judgment would include, but not be limited to: the moral character of candidates for sacred office, the appropriate censure to impose after a disciplinary trial, or judgment about the comparative credibility of conflicting witnesses. Therefore, a higher court should not reverse such a judgment by a lower court, unless there is clear error on the part of the lower court.
4. The higher court does have the power and obligation of judicial review, which cannot be satisfied by always deferring to the findings of a lower court. Therefore, a higher court should not consider itself obliged to exhibit the same deference to a lower court when the issues being reviewed involve the interpretation of the Constitution of the Church. Regarding such issues, the higher court has the duty and authority to interpret and apply the Constitution of the Church according to its best abilities and understanding, regardless of the opinion of the lower court.

<sup>12</sup> Note particularly that BCO 37-3; 37-4; 37-5 state that the proceedings of restoration shall be concluded with “prayer and thanksgiving” and restoration to office additionally involves extending “the right hand of fellowship.”

<sup>13</sup> Money (greed), sex (lust, passion), and power (gaining and abusing authority) are all alluring. The desire for and the abuse of authority is often the most enticing temptation. Diotrophes-type persons (III John 1:9-10) were a problem not only in John’s day are but in churches throughout all time and in many places.

<sup>14</sup> **34-7.** When a minister, pending a trial, shall make confession, if the matter be base and flagitious, such as drunkenness, uncleanness, or crimes of a greater nature, however penitent he may appear to the satisfaction of all, the court shall without delay impose definite suspension or depose him from the ministry.

**34-8.** A minister under indefinite suspension from his office or deposed for scandalous conduct shall not be restored, even on the deepest sorrow for his sin, until he shall exhibit for a considerable time such an eminently exemplary, humble and edifying life and testimony as shall heal the wound made by his scandal. A deposed minister shall in no case be restored until it shall appear that the general sentiment of the Church is strongly in his favor, and demands his restoration; and then only by the court inflicting the censure, or with that court’s consent.

**34-9.** When a minister is deposed, his pastoral relation shall be dissolved; but when he is suspended from office it shall be left to the discretion of the Presbytery whether the censure shall include the dissolution of the pastoral relation.



- A minister must preside when a session conducts judicial cases (BCO 12-3).
- Larger churches sometimes use judicial commissions (BCO 15-1, 2, 3; See Sessional Judicial Commissions, attached).
  - The session must have specifically empowered the commission to serve as a judicial commission.
  - A minister must preside in a judicial case (BCO 12-3).
  - The judicial commission's decision must be ratified by the court appointing the commission (BCO 15-3).
  - All the rights and privileges of the accused tried before the session as whole apply to a trial before a judicial commission.
- Keep careful records and minutes. The testimony of witness must be recorded and transcribed (BCO 35-7). When higher courts (Presbyteries and the General Assembly [through its Standing Judicial Commission]) act upon complaints brought forward and appeals,<sup>15</sup> the appellate court does not ordinarily try a case de novo, but depends heavily on the Record of the Case. Therefore the Record of the Case needs to be detailed and preserved.
- Understand legal liabilities in continuing to prosecute a case after a person has left the church (BCO 38-3) and there may be liability in the public announcement of censures (BCO 36-3; 36-4).
- The Bible does not address every possible situation explicitly and in detail (e.g. physical abuse in marriage) or situations that have developed recently (e.g. internet pornography addiction, drug addiction). Elders have to use wisdom and discretion in applying biblical principles to specific situations.
- The Westminster Confession I-6 addresses the issue of using wisdom, discretion, and deduction in governing the Church.<sup>16</sup>

### **Nature of the Ten Commandments**

- Moral principles from which specific applications were later revealed or from which applications may be deduced.<sup>17</sup> The Ten Commandments are apodictic laws, the case laws apply apodictic laws to specific situations, but there is not a case law for every possible situation.
- A summary – a condensation of abiding moral principles.
- Covenant (Exod. 19:5; Deut. 5:2-3) – It is God's covenant with a redeemed people, rather than a conquered people.

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<sup>15</sup> In the PCA BCO the term “appeal” is used only with reference to one who has undergone a trial (BCO 42-1), all other judicial cases brought forward to a higher court are termed “complaints” (BCO 43).

<sup>16</sup> The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word: and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

<sup>17</sup> This is why the *Westminster Larger Catechism* uses the procedure in dealing with each commandment of (1) definition, (2) duties required, and (3) sins forbidden. Duties and sins are extensive.

- Based on God's love and grace – The prologue is, “I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Exod. 20:1; Deut. 5:6). This is statement/formula that is used over 125 times
- Personal and individual<sup>18</sup> - All Ten Commandments are singular.
- Simple negatives – Negatives are concise. Negatives zero in on our evil inclinations. For every vice, there is a corresponding virtue. Simply refraining from evil does not completely fulfill the commandments.

### **Limitations of church discipline:**

- The judicial process itself does not change people's hearts.
- The judicial process does not heal broken relationships.

### **Difficult Cases**

- Marital breakdowns
- Divorces
- Teenaged misbehaviors.
- Sexual misconduct, particularly that which results in a pregnancy. Both parties should be considered.
- Child abuse perpetrators
- Internet pornography additions; internet romantic relationships, etc.
- Disputes among members involving money.
- Persons with emotional and mental disorders or with physical/biochemical disorders that affect behavior.

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<sup>18</sup> Though the King James Version is difficult for some to read because of its 17<sup>th</sup>-century English, it does have the advantage of easily discerning between second person singular (thee, thou, thine) and second person plural (ye, you, your).

## PROCEDURAL CHECKLIST FOR PCA BCO RULES OF DISCIPLINE

Originally written by T. David Gordon  
Updated by the Stated Clerk's Office

*"The following checklist is, to the best of our knowledge, complete and accurate as of November 2021. Since the Book of Church Order is subject to revision at each meeting of the General Assembly, the checklist may not be accurate beyond the next meeting of the Assembly. Updated checklists are available, upon request, from the Stated Clerk's Office in Atlanta."*

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## PROCEDURAL CHECKLIST FOR PCA BCO RULES OF DISCIPLINE

(This information to be used in connection with the SJC Manual)

### Prior to First Meeting of Court

Line Nbr	Date or N/A	Initials	Item	BCO #
1.			Process entered before Session of church to which alleged offender belongs (unless offender is a minister, or process is an appeal)	33-1
2.			Injured party has tried means of <b>reconciliation</b>	31-5
3.			<b>Instruction</b> has been given to offender	31-5,7
4.			Consider <b>character</b> of person bringing accusations	31-8
5.			Give warning to voluntary prosecutor regarding slander	31-9
6.			Suspend official functions of church court members while under process (at discretion of court)	31-10
7.			There is no statute of limitations to begin process, however; depending on the subject of the case, it can be considered whether passage of time will make fair adjudication unachievable.	32-20
			<u>Cases without process:</u>	
8.			If any person comes forward and makes his offense known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process.	38-1
9.			If a minister believes God has not called him to the ministry, see BCO 38-2 and 46-8	38-2; 46-8
10.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If a member or officer joins another evangelical church, see BCO 38-3a</li> <li>b. If a member or officer joins another body judged as failing to maintain the Word and Sacraments, see BCO 38-3b.</li> <li>c. If a member or officer willfully neglects the church for a period of one year, or makes known no intention of fulfilling church vows, see BCO 38-4.</li> </ul>	38-3a 38-3b 38-4

### First Meeting of Court

1.			Gal 6:1 reiterated	32-1
2.			Charge made out	32-2
3.			Charge reduced to writing	32-3
4.			<b>Prosecutor</b> appointed by court	31-2; 32-3.1
5.			<b>Indictment</b> prepared	31-2,4;32-3.2
6.			Times, places, circumstances particularly stated	32-5
7.			All parties and witnesses <b>cited</b> to appear and be heard at another meeting	32-3.3
8.			Attention called to Rules of Discipline (BCO 27-46)	32-3
9.			At least 10 days elapse between citation and next meeting	32-3.3; 32-7
10.			Citation issued and signed by moderator or clerk by order and in name of the court.	32-4

**Second Meeting of Court**

<b>Line Nbr</b>	<b>Date or N/A</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>BCO #</b>
1.			<b>Charges read</b> to the accused	32-3
2.			Counsel assigned to accused if necessarily absent	32-3
3.			<b>Accused responds</b> with "guilty" or "not guilty"	32-3
4.			If "guilty" then court may deal with discretion	32-3
5.			If "not guilty" then trial date shall be scheduled no sooner than 14 days after citation	32-3
6.			<b>If accused refuses</b> to obey citation, cite a second time	32-6a
7.			Refusal to plead or cooperate will be dealt with for contumacy	32-6b
8.			<b>When accused found contumacious</b>	33-2
9.			Accused immediately suspended from the sacraments for contumacy (and if officer from office)	33-2
10.			Censure made public if Session deems expedient	33-2
11.			<b>If</b> charge is of <b>gross crime or heresy</b> , court may proceed to inflict highest censure	33-3
12.			<b>If</b> impracticable immediately to commence process, Session may <b>fence the Table</b> from the accused until examination.	33-4
13.			<b>If</b> offense took place at a <b>distance</b>	
14.			Court may appoint a commission of its body, request coordinate court where facts occurred to take testimony, or have the testimony taken by videoconference.	32-8
15.			If offense not likely to become known to court of jurisdiction, Court of location sends notice to court of jurisdiction which shall proceed against accused; or whole case may be remitted to court of location.	32-9

**The Trial**

<b>Line Nbr</b>	<b>Date or N/A</b>	<b>Initial</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>BCO #</b>
			Prior to trial:	
1.			Court ascertains that citations duly served	32-10
2.			Judicial Committee appointed if expedient	32-11
3.			Challenge for cause by either party on the right of any member to sit in trial. Other members of court decide the question	32-16
4.			Disqualification of any member considered	32-17
			In trial:	
5.			1. Moderator <b>charges</b> the court	32-12, 32.15.1
6.			2. <b>Indictment</b> read, <b>Answer</b> of accused heard	32-15.2
7.			3. <b>Witnesses examined</b> in presence of the accused	32-13
			<b><u>Witnesses for Prosecutor</u></b>	32-15.3
8.			Oath of 35-6 administered by Moderator	35-6
9.			Witnesses examined by Prosecutor party	35-5

Line Nbr	Date or N/A	Initials	Item	BCO #
10.			Witnesses cross-examined by Accused party	35-5
11.			Additional interrogatories by parties or court members	35-5
12.			More than one witness necessary to establish charge, unless corroborative evidence is produced in addition to one witness.	35-3
			<b><u>Witnesses for Accused</u></b>	32-15.3
13.			Oath of 35-6 administered by Moderator	35-6
14.			Witnesses examined by Accused party	35-5
15.			Witnesses cross-examined by Prosecutor party	35-5
16.			Additional interrogatories by parties or court members	35-5
			<b><u>Pertaining to All Witnesses</u></b>	
17.			Witnesses are of proper age and intelligence, and believe in the existence of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments.	35-1
18.			Either party has the right to challenge a witness whom he believes to be incompetent; to be decided by court.	35-1
19.			Husband or wife not compelled to bear testimony against one another	35-2
20.			No witness afterwards to be examined, unless a member of the court, shall be present during the examination of another witness on the same case, if either party object.	35-4
21.			Permission granted by Moderator for all questions before being put or answered, subject to appeal to the court.	35-5
22.			All testimony shall be recorded (transcription, audiotape, videotape, or some other electronic means) and witnesses informed of such prior to testifying. (See also BCO 32-18)	35-7
23.			Testimony may be taken by commission, coordinate court or video conference if necessary due to distance, per BCO 32-8 & 35-10.	35-10
24.			Professional counsel prohibited to appear	32-19
25.			4. <b>Parties heard</b>	32-15.4
26.			Prosecutor first	
27.			Accused next (not compelled to testify, 35-1)	
28.			Prosecutor closes	
29.			5. <b>Roll</b> is called—members may express opinion in the case	32-15.5
30.			6. <b>Vote</b> is taken	32-15.6
31.			Verdict announced	
32.			Judgment entered on records	
33.			Minutes of trial kept by clerk	32-18;35-7
34.			Record of the Case assembled by clerk	32-18

**If Accused is a Minister**

<b>Line Nbr</b>	<b>Date or N/A</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>BCO #</b>
1.			Scandalous charges not received on slight grounds.	34-2
2.			Minister warned in private if guilty of private offense	34-3
3.			When accused found to be contumacious:	32-6
4.			Immediately suspended from sacraments and office	34-4a
5.			Record made of fact and of charges	34-4a
6.			Censure made public	34-4a
7.			If accused persists in contumacy, he shall be deposed and excommunicated	34-4b
8.			Errors carefully considered for heresy and schism	34-5
9.			Measures taken to remove scandal if appropriate	34-6
10.			Definite suspension or deposition imposed if minister makes confession pending trial	34-7
11.			Pastoral relation dissolved in case of deposition	34-9
12.			Assessment of dissolution in case of suspension from office	34-9
13.			For failure to discharge official functions, see 34-10	34-10

**Infliction of Church Censures**

<b>Line Nbr</b>	<b>Date or N/A</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>BCO #</b>
1.			Court proceeds with tenderness (Gal 6:1)	36-1
2.			<u>Censure of Admonition</u>	36-3
3.			Administered in private if offense is private	
4.			Administered in presence of court if offense is public	
5.			Announced in public if court deems expedient	
6.			<u>Definite Suspension from Office</u> [see also BCO 33-2; 34-4(a)]	36-4
7.			Administered in presence of court alone or in open session of court, as court deems best	
8.			Public announcement made at court's discretion	
9.			<u>Indefinite Suspension from Office or Sacraments.</u> [see also BCO 33-2; 34-4 (a); 30-1; 30-3]	36-5
10.			Administered in presence of court alone or in open session of court, as court deems best	
11.			Public announcement made at court's discretion	
12.			Administered with added solemnity	
13.			Administered under blessing of God for repentance	
14.			Address offending brother per BCO 36-5	
15.			<u>Excommunication</u> [see also BCO 33-3; 34-4(b)]	36-6
16.			If accused persists in contumacy, shall be excommunicated	33-3
17.			Administered in presence of court alone or in open session of court, as court deems best	
18.			Public announcement made at court's discretion	
19.			Moderator reiterates steps of discipline taken	
20.			Explain authority of Church to excommunicate from Matt 18:15-18, and 1Cor 5:1-5	
21.			Administer censure in words of BCO 36-6	

Line Nbr	Date or N/A	Initials	Item	BCO #
22.			<u>Deposition</u>	36-7
23.			Administered by Moderator in words of <i>BCO</i> 36-7	
24.			If deposed without excommunication, Presbytery assigns him to membership in some particular church, subject to the approval of the Session of that church	46-8
25.			If includes suspension or excommunication, add appropriate words from <i>BCO</i> 36-7	36-7

### **Removal of Church Censures**

1.			<u>Definite Suspension from Office</u>	37-1
2.			Offender repents of contumacy	33-2
3.			Gives satisfaction in relation to his charges	34-4a
4.			Declare words of <i>BCO</i> 37-1	
5.			<u>Indefinite Suspension from Sacraments</u> (see <i>BCO</i> 30)	37-2,3
6.			Rulers of church frequently converse with him and pray for God to grant repentance	
7.			Offender repents of contumacy	33-2
8.			Gives satisfaction in relation to his charges	34-4a
9.			Court satisfied with reality of repentance	37-3
10.			Offender admitted to profess repentance	
11.			Restoration declared by words in <i>BCO</i> 37-3	
12.			<u>Excommunication</u>	37-4
13.			Session obtained sufficient evidence of sincere repentance	
14.			Questions of <i>BCO</i> 37-4 posed to excommunicated person, with affirmative response given	
15.			Exhortation of encouragement and comfort given	
16.			Sentence of restoration pronounced (from <i>BCO</i> 37-4)	
17.			<u>Deposition from Office</u>	37-5,6
18.			Public confession made	
19.			Restoration announced by words of <i>BCO</i> 37-5	
20.			Absolved ruling elder or deacon re-elected by people before resumption of office	37-6
21.			<u>Restoration of Minister</u> [see also <i>BCO</i> 34-4a]	
22.			Minister exhibits for a considerable time such an eminently exemplary, humble and edifying life and testimony as shall heal the wound made by his scandal.	34-8
23.			General sentiment of the church is strongly in minister's favor and demands his restoration	34-8
24.			Presbytery proceeds with great caution	37-8
25.			Admitted to Sacraments	37-8
26.			Granted privilege to preach on probation for a time	37-8
27.			See <i>BCO</i> 37-9 for jurisdiction in removal of censures	37-9
28.			Restoration pronounced	37-8,9



**General Review and Control**

Line Nbr	Date or N/A	Initials	Item	BCO #
1.			Areas Reviewed:	40-2
2.			Proceedings correctly recorded	40-2.1
3.			Proceedings regular and in accordance with Constitution	40-2.2
4.			Proceedings wise, equitable, suited to promote welfare of Church	40-2.3
5.			Lawful injunctions of higher court obeyed	40-2.4
6.			Higher court records approval or disapproval, and corrections of lower court records	40-3
7.			Requirement communicated for review and correction of serious irregularities	40-3
8.			If appeal or complaint is in process, judicial case proceedings not dealt with under review and control	40-3
9.			Gross negligence of lower court examined, deliberated and judged by higher court.	40-4
10.			In case of delinquency or unconstitutional proceedings:	40-5 (cf. BCO)
11.			Offending court cited to appear	
12.			Offending court show what it has done or failed to do	
13.			Court issuing citation may:	
14.			Reverse or redress lower court's proceedings	
15.			Censure delinquent court	
16.			Remit whole matter with injunction to delinquent court	
17.			Stay all further proceedings in the case	
18.			Process against lower court conducted according to rules for process against individuals	40-6

**References**

1.			Reference deemed <b>necessary</b> by lower court	41-5
2.			All testimony and other documents duly prepared	41-6
3.			Reference presented to higher court, accompanied by necessary records	41-4

**Appeals**

1.			Appeal made only to next higher court	42-1
2.			Regular trial has taken place	42-2
3.			Legitimate grounds of appeal established	42-3
4.			Notice of Appeal given	42-4
5.			Filed by appellant with clerk of lower court and clerk of higher court, within thirty (30) days of notification of the last court's decision. Notification of the last court's decision shall be deemed to have occurred on the day of mailing.	
6.			No attempts made to circularize courts	

7.			Clerk of lower court file Record of the Case with clerk of higher court, not more than 30 days after receipt of notice of appeal	42-5
<b>Line Nbr</b>	<b>Date or N/A</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>BCO #</b>
8.			<u>Record of the Case Includes:</u>	42-5
9.			Copy of all proceedings in connection with case	
10.			Notice of appeal and reasons therefore	
11.			Response of lower court	
12.			Evidence	
13.			Any papers bearing on the case Admissibility of Audio/Video recordings	OMSJC 7.2B3
14.			If Record not filed, rebuke given by higher court	42-7
15.			No information other than Record of the Case taken into consideration by higher court	42-5;32-18; but see 35-14
16.			Judgment of lower court suspended pending higher court's decision	42-6
17.			Suspension, excommunication or deposition may be put into effect for sufficient reasons until final decision	42-6
18.			Higher court decision whether appeal is in order	42-7
19.			Higher court hears the case	42-8
20.			Record of the Case is read	
21.			Each side allotted not over 30 minutes for oral argument	
22.			Appellant given right to open and close argument	
23.			Suitable rebuke given by appellate court if appellant manifests litigious or unChristian spirit	42-12
24.			Court or commission enters closed session	42-8
25.			Court or commission discuss merits of the case	42-8
26.			Vote taken, without further debate, on each specification:	42-8
27.			<b>Shall this specification of error be sustained?</b>	42-8
28.			Minute explanatory of court's action written, and entered into Record of the Case	42-8
29.			Decision of higher court made:	42-9
30.			Affirm in whole or in part	
31.			Reverse in whole or in part	
32.			Render decision that should have been rendered	
33.			Remand the case to lower court for new trial	
34.			Written opinion prepared	
35.			Copy of opinion and judgment delivered personally or mailed to the <b>lower court</b> , with written receipt required.	
36.			Copy of opinion and judgment delivered personally or mailed to the <b>appellant</b> , with written receipt required.	

Line Nbr	Date or N/A	Initials	Item	BCO #
37.			An appellant shall be considered to have abandoned his appeal if he fails to appear before the higher court, in person or by counsel, for a hearing thereof, after he has been properly notified; but an appellant may waive, in writing, his right to appear with permission of the court and not be considered to have abandoned his case. In case of such failure to appear, the judgment of the lower court will stand unless the appellant gives to the court a prompt and satisfactory explanation.	42-11

**Complaints**

1.			Written notice of complaint, with supporting reasons, filed with clerk of court within 60 days following meeting of the court	43-2
2.			Court consider complaint at next meeting	
3.			No attempt made to circularize the court	
4.			Complainant may take complaint to next higher court if:	43-3
5.			Court alleged to be delinquent denies complaint	
6.			Court fails to consider complaint by next stated meeting	
7.			Complainant files written notice of complaint together with supporting reasons, with both the clerk of the lower court and the clerk of the higher court within thirty (30) days notification of the last court's decision. Notification of the last court's decision shall be deemed to have occurred on the day of mailing.	
8.			Action against which the complaint made <b>not suspended</b> , unless 1/3 of the members vote for suspension, until final decision in the higher court.	43-4
9.			Representative(s) appointed to defend action of lower court	43-5
10.			Clerk of lower court files following documents with clerk of higher court, not more than 30 days after receiving notice of complaint	43-6
11.			Copy of all proceedings in connection with the complaint	
12.			Notice of complaint and supporting reasons	
13.			Response of the lower court, if any	
14.			Any papers bearing on the complaint.	
15.			Rebuke from higher court in case of failure to thus file	43-6
16.			Complainant waives right to appear with permission of court	43-7
17.			Complainant has abandoned complaint if fails to appear without waiving right or giving satisfactory explanation	43-7

18.			Higher court hears complaint if considers complaint in order	43-8
<b>Line Nbr</b>	<b>Date or N/A</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>BCO #</b>
19.			Higher court may appoint commission to hear complaint	43-8; 15-2,3
20.			Court notifies complainant and respondent in writing of the date set for the hearing	43-8
			<u>At the Hearing:</u>	43-9
21.			All papers bearing on complaint are read	
22.			Complainant given opportunity to present argument	
23.			Respondent given opportunity to present argument	
24.			Complainant given right of opening and closing the argument	
25.			Court or commission enters closed session	
26.			Discusses and considers merits of the complaint.	
27.			Vote taken as to what disposition should be made of the complaint	
28.			Complainant notified of the court's decision	
29.			Respondent notified of the court's decision	
30.			Court may annul whole or any part of lower court's action	43-10
31.			Court may send matter back to lower court for new hearing	43-10

### **Dissents, Protests, and Objections**

1.			(For definitions of D, P, & O, see BCO 45-2,3,4)	45-2,3,4
2.			D/P filed by one who had right to vote in the case	45-1
3.			O filed by one who did <i>not</i> have right to vote	45-1, 4
4.			D/P/O filed with clerk of lower court within 30 days following meeting of lower court, or with clerk of the General Assembly before its adjournment.	45-1
5.			D/P/O filed with reasons (generally, but <u>not necessary</u> )	45-2,3,4
6.			D/P/O in temperate language, respectful to court	45-5
7.			D/P/O recorded by court	45-5
8.			Court records answer to D/P/O if deemed necessary	45-5

### **Jurisdiction**

1.			When church member removes his residence beyond bounds:	46-1
2.			Certificate of dismissal obtained from old Session	
3.			Certificate of dismissal presented to new church	
4.			If Certificate of dismissal not possible:	
5.			Received by the Session upon other testimonials	

6.			Old church duly notified	
7.			Elders of old church continue oversight until transfer	46-2
<b>Line Nbr</b>	<b>Date or N/A</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>BCO #</b>
8.			Elders of old church inform on duty to transfer	
9.			Old church notify session of church in new bounds	
10.			If transfer neglected for 1 year, name removed from roll, unless special permission granted	46-2, 38-4
11.			Regular connection with new church formed	46-3
12.			Associate Members:	46-4
13.			All rights and privileges afforded	
14.			Barred from voting in congregational or corporate mtgs.	
15.			Barred from holding office	
16.			If a member or officer joins another evangelical church, see <i>BCO</i> 38-3a	38-3a
17.			If a member or officer joins another body judged as failing to maintain the Word and Sacraments, see <i>BCO</i> 38-3b	38-3b
18.			Member who has willfully neglected church for 1 year, or has made known he/she has no intention of fulfilling vows:	38-4
19.			Session follows Scriptural procedures (Matt 18, Gal. 6:1)	
20.			Session reminds member of solemn covenant	
21.			Session erases name from church roll	
22.			Session notifies person whose name was erased	
23.			Minister/Licentiate/Candidate dismissed from Presbytery:	46-6
24.			Name of Presbytery to which dismissed, in certificate	
25.			Remains under jurisdiction until received by other Presbytery	
26.			Certificate of Dismission valid testimony of good standing for only 1 year	46-7
27.			Minister divested of his office without censure, or deposed without excommunication:	46-8
28.			Presbytery assigns him membership in some particular church, subject to approval of Session of that church	

**Presbytery Judicial Commissions Acting As Appellate Courts**

1.			See APPENDIX H of <i>BCO</i>	15, Appendix H
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## **Requesting an Investigation or Filing Charges against a Church Member, Church Officer, or Minister**

L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk Emeritus PCA

There is no form appended to the *Book of Church Order* for one to use in requesting a Session to investigate a church member, Deacon, or Ruling Elder or for one to use in requesting a Presbytery to investigate a Teaching Elder (Minister). Note that *BCO* Appendix G is for the use of a Session or Presbytery to use after the Session or Presbytery has conducted an investigation under *BCO* 31-2 and has found a strong presumption of guilt and instituted judicial process. This information given below may be helpful.

### **Cautions regarding Making Allegations or Filing Charges**

- Requesting a judicial investigation is a serious matter and is not to be done quickly or lightly.
- A church court is to exercise great caution in receiving accusations from anyone known to have a malignant spirit towards the accused; from one who is not of good character, from one who is under censure or judicial process; from one who is deeply interested in any respect in the conviction of the accused; or from anyone who is known to be litigious, rash, or highly imprudent (*BCO* 31-8).
- A person who becomes a voluntary prosecutor, i.e. one who volunteers to serve as the prosecutor of charges he has made himself may face charges of slander, if he fails to show probable cause (*BCO* 31-9).
- Scandalous charges ought not be brought against ministers on slight grounds (*BCO* 34-2)

### **Personal and General Offenses (*BCO* 31-5; 31-6; 31-7)**

- Personal offense is an individual Christian's sinning against another individual Christian. When a personal offense has been committed one may elect to forgive or overlook the offense, or else one should follow the instructions of our Lord and seek to work out the situation personally (Matthew 18:15-16).
- A general offense is a sin or serious violation of the PCA Constitution (the *Westminster Standards* together with the *Book of Church Order*) that is injurious to the honor of religion, i.e. the holiness of the Church.
- A church court may judicially investigate personal offenses as if they were general offenses when the interests of religion seem to demand it.
- When a church court institutes prosecution for a general offense, the Matthew 18 process is not required.

### **Chargeable Offenses (*BCO* 29-1 through 4; 39-3)**

- In order for a member or officer of the PCA to be charged and tried there must either be an allegation of a chargeable offense or a charge is filed (*BCO* 31-2; 32-2). Errors of judgment and relational failures may or may not rise to the level of a chargeable offense. "Chargeable offenses" (*BCO* 29-1 through 4), are "violations of divine law," or doctrines or practices contrary to the Word of God, or the Constitution of the Church. The Constitution of the Church is *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, and *The Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms*. See also *BCO* 39-3.
- In the case of a local church member, a chargeable offense could also be a violation of membership vows (*BCO* 57-5).

- In the case of a Ruling Elder or Deacon a chargeable offense could also be a violation of his ordination vows (*BCO* 24-6).
- In the case of a Minister a chargeable offense could also be a violation of his ordination vows (*BCO* 21-5).
- Note that the ordination vows a Deacon, Ruling Elder, or Teaching Elder (Minister) takes are greater than those an individual member takes. Officers are held to a higher standard.

### **Filing with the Court of Original Jurisdiction**

- In the case of a local church member, Ruling Elder, or Deacon, allegations or charges should be filed with the Clerk of Session of the church of which the person, Deacon, or Ruling Elder is a member, not the Presbytery or General Assembly.
- Ministers are members of Presbytery, not members of a local church. Allegations or charges against a minister should be filed with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of which he is a member, not the Session or General Assembly.

### **Investigation of Allegations or Charges**

- In either instance, the court of original jurisdiction (Session for local church members, Deacons, and Ruling Elders, and Presbytery for ministers) shall conduct a preliminary investigation (*BCO* 31-2) of allegations that are made and charges that are brought and determine if there is a “strong presumption of guilt of the party involved.”
- If there is a “strong presumption of guilt of the party involved” the “court shall institute process, and shall appoint a prosecutor to conduct the case.”
- If there is no “strong presumption of guilt of the party involved,” the matter is ended, unless there is a complaint.

### **Form of Allegations or Charges**

- Allegations or charges should not be vague.
- Allegations or charges should be as specific as possible as to the nature of the sin or constitutional violation, citing instances, dates, circumstances, persons who witnessed alleged offenses, or who have pertinent information, along with evidence and documentation that substantiate the allegations or charges.
- References to specific applicable portions of the Scripture, *Westminster Standards* or *Book of Church Order* should be included.
- When dealing with alleged violations of the Ten Commandments, the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Qq. 98-151, are helpful.

The Office of the Stated Clerk may give advice and counsel regarding constitutional and procedural matters. Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, “The Rules of Assembly Operation,” “The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission,” and/or *Robert’s Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA or staff members of the Office of the Stated Clerk are for information only, however, and are not authoritative rulings that may only be made by the courts of the Church. Responses to inquiries are based on information supplied by the inquirer, which may not necessarily be comprehensive. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not represent parties in ecclesiastical judicial cases and may not prepare judicial cases for parties. Parties to potential cases or cases in process are responsible for their own constitutional and procedural knowledge and understanding. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not give legal advice. When legal advice is needed, professional legal counsel should be secured from one familiar with applicable laws and regulations.

## **TIMELINE FOR HANDLING A COMPLAINT OR APPEAL ARISING FROM A PRESBYTERY**

1. Cases are filed with both the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery and the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly within 30 days of the action of Presbytery (BCO 42.4; 43.3).
2. Upon receipt of the complaint or appeal, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly requests the Record of the Case (ROC) from the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery (BCO 32.18; 35.7-8; 42.5; 43.5-6; Operating Manual of the SJC [OMSJC] §7).
3. The Stated Clerk of Presbytery has 30 days in which to submit the ROC.
4. Upon receipt of the ROC, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly submits the ROC to the officers of the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) for a determination on whether the case is administratively in order, (OMSJC 9.1a, 3, 5). There is no exact timeframe specified in the SCJM for how long the SJC officers have to take action.
5. If the case is not administratively in order, parties have 30 days to put it in order (OMSJC 9.2).
6. If the case is determined by the officers to be administratively in order, it is assigned to a judicial panel (OMSJC 9.5, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3; RAO 17.3).
7. Within 10 days of receiving the ROC, the panel has an initial meeting to organize itself (OMSJC 10.4).
8. Within 30 days of receiving the ROC, the panel determines if the case is judicially in order (OMSJC 10.5).
9. Disputes over the ROC may take 55 days or longer (OMSJC 7.4).
10. If the case is not judicially in order, the parties have 30 days to put the case in order (OMSJC 10.6).
11. If the case is judicially in order, 40-days notice is given to the parties for a date of a hearing (OMSJC 10.7). But the 40-day period may be decreased if both parties agree in writing (OMSJC 10.7). Within the 40-day period prior to the hearing, briefs are filed in accordance by the deadlines specified (OMSJC 10.7 and § 8).
12. The hearing may be either, 1) in person, 2) via telephone conference call (OMSJC 10.7.a) if all parties and panel members agree, or 3) by written brief (BCO 42-11; 43-7) with a party giving written notice to do so.
13. The panel has 40 days after the hearing within which to render proposed and recommended decision (OMSJC 10.10).
14. Upon receipt of the proposed and recommended decision, the Stated Clerk immediately sends a copy to the parties (OMSJC 10.11).
15. The case may either be reheard by the entire SJC (OMSJC 9.3, § 11, 17.7) or reviewed by the full SJC for final action (OMSJC 17.8) at its optional fall meeting (during third week of October) or its mandatory spring meeting (during the first week of March, OMSJC 4.1).



There are several ways a case could be delayed by either or both parties. But there are several ways the cases could be expedited toward a proposed and recommended decision by a judicial panel.

1. The SJC officers could act quickly on determining a case to be administratively in order (OMSJC 9.1) as soon as the ROC is received.
2. One judicial panel could deal with multiple cases dealing with the same situation (OMSJC 18.3 a).
3. The judicial panel could combine its constituting and initial meetings into one meeting (OMSJC 10.5).
4. If both parties agreed upon the ROC quickly, time would be saved.
5. The 40-day notice for a hearing could be shortened by the written agreement of both parties (OMSJC 10.7 b.).
6. To reduce expenses the hearing could be by electronic means (OMSJC 10.7 a.), if all parties and panel members agree, or by written brief (BCO 42-11; 43-7) with a party giving written notice to do so.
7. After the hearing the judicial panel could take less than 20 days to render a written decision (OMSJC 10.10) depending on factors such as the complexity of the case.

## Procedures for a Case without Process

### BCO 38-1

L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk Emeritus, PCA

#### **Differences between Cases with Process & Cases without Process**

##### **Cases with Process**

- BCO 31-2 investigation resulting in a strong presumption of guilt to a chargeable offense (BCO 29-1).
- Full trial procedures, process, standards of evidence, prosecutor, defender, witnesses, etc., resulting in a verdict of guilty or not guilty.
- Upon conviction, a guilty person may appeal to a higher court concerning both the guilty verdict and the censure imposed and may cite several bases for appeal (BCO 42-1, 2, 3, and 4).
- Notice of appeal has effect of suspending the judgment (BCO 42-6), i.e., holding the censure in abeyance until the appeal is settled by the higher court.

##### **Cases without Process (BCO 38-1)**

- Person comes forward and makes a "confession of guilt" (Cf. BCO 29-1)
- No full trial procedures, process, standards of evidence, prosecutor, defender, witnesses, etc., because the person makes a "confession of guilt."
- After the court had rendered a judgment (i.e. imposed a censure), the person may file a complaint concerning the judgment, BCO 38-1; 43-1 (i.e. against censure that was imposed based on his confession of guilt). In making such complaint, he is not retracting his "confession of guilt."
- Filing a complaint does *not* suspend the censure unless the court acts to do so (BCO 43-4).

#### **Procedural Checklist for Cases without Process**

<b>Line Nbr</b>	<b>Date or N/A</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>BCO #</b>
1.			Person comes forward and makes known his offense to the court.	38-1; 29-1
2.			<b>A statement of facts</b> is prepared for the record, specifying the sins or also the violations of the PCA Constitution ( <i>Westminster Standards, Book of Church Order</i> ) to which the person makes <b>a confession of guilt</b> . It is wise to be as specific and concise as possible, including references to Scripture and the PCA Constitution.	38-1; 29-1
3.			The person agrees that he <b>intends to make a confession of guilt</b> , that the statement of facts is accurate, and <b>that he permits the court to render a judgment</b> (impose a censure) without process based on his confession of guilt and statement of facts. It is wise to have the person sign such a statement and that a copy be retained by the clerk.	38-1

4.			If the <b>person</b> who is making a confession of guilt <b>wishes to make a statement to the court</b> the court may not use such a statement as a basis for judgment without the person's permission. Therefore, it is wise for the court to have the person certify in writing that he wishes to make a statement to the court and that he gives his permission for the court to use his statement as a basis for judgment (imposition of censure).	38-1
5.			It is appropriate that the moderator remind the court of their responsibilities (Gal. 6:1). Disciplinary procedures ordinarily are conducted in executive session.	32-12 and 15-1 may be adapted to the occasion.
6.			The court decides <b>whether the person is repentant and is making such restitution as is appropriate</b> to the offenses to which he has made a confession of guilt.	30-1
7.			If the person is <b>a minister</b> , the court decides <b>whether the offense</b> to which the person made a confession of guilt is <b>base</b> (vile, contemptible) <b>and flagitious</b> (heinous, extraordinarily wicked, flagrantly wicked).	34-7
8.			The court deliberates as to <b>whether a censure is called for, which censures are available, and which censures are appropriate</b> to the case.	38-1; Ch. 30; Ch. 36
9.			If, in the opinion of the court, <b>the person is repentant and makes such restitution as is appropriate</b> , the censure of <b>admonition</b> may be imposed. Such censure may be administered in private by a member of the court or in the presence of the court by the moderator.	30-1; 30-2; 36-3
10.			If, in the opinion of the court, <b>the person is repentant and makes such restitution as is appropriate</b> , the censure of <b>definite suspension from office</b> may be imposed, when the credit of religion, the honor of Christ, and the good of the penitent require it. Such censure is administered in closed session or open session of the court.	30-1; 30-3 ¶ 3; 36-4
11.			If, in the opinion of the court, <b>the person remains impenitent or has not made appropriate restitution</b> , even though he has made a confession of guilt, the court may impose the censure of <b>indefinite suspension from the sacrament</b> . (There is no definite suspension from the sacrament, BCO 30-3, ¶ 1). Such censure is administered in closed session or open session of the court with added solemnity.	30-1; 30-3 ¶ 1; 36-5
12.			If, in the opinion of the court, <b>the person who is a deacon, ruling elder, or minister remains impenitent or has not made appropriate restitution</b> , even though he has made a confession of guilt, the court may impose the censure of <b>indefinite suspension from office</b> . Such censure is administered in closed session or open session of the court with added solemnity.	30-1; 30-3 ¶ 4; 36-5 (See also 34-8 for a minister)

13.			If, in the opinion of the court, <b>the person remains impenitent or has not made appropriate restitution</b> , even though he has made a confession of guilt, the court may impose the censure of <b>excommunication</b> . Such censure is administered in closed session or open session of the court, or in public by the moderator	30-1; 30-3 ¶ 4; 30-4; 36-6
14.			If, in the opinion of the court, <b>the person who is a deacon, ruling elder, or minister remains impenitent or has not made appropriate restitution</b> , even though he has made a confession of guilt, the court may impose the censure <b>of deposition from office</b> . Such censure is administered by the moderator.	30-1; 30-3 ¶ 4; 30-5; 36-7
15.			If the <b>person is a minister</b> , and the court considers the offenses to which he has confessed to be <b>base</b> (vile, contemptible) <b>and flagitious</b> (heinous, extraordinarily wicked, flagrantly wicked), the court must immediately impose either the censure of <b>definite suspension from office</b> or the censure of <b>deposition from office</b> . Such censure is administered by the moderator in closed session or open session of the court.	34-7; 30-1; 30-3 ¶ 3, ¶ 4; 36-4; 36-7

**Sample**

**Required Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt for a BCO 38-1 Case  
without Process**

I [insert name] agree that the following statement of facts is accurate:

[List accurately and concisely the actions, statements, or attitudes to which the person is making a confession of guilt. Cite circumstances, events, and dates as may be relevant and appropriate. Cite scriptural references or quotations that are applicable. Cite sections of the *Westminster Standards* or the *Book of Church Order* that are applicable. *The Westminster Larger Catechism* is particularly helpful in this regard in its exposition of the Ten Commandments, *WLC* 91-151].

I confess that I am guilty of the sins of [list].

I confess that I am guilty of violating the PCA constitution [cite sections] by [cite offenses committed].

I affirm that I intend to make a confession of guilt as specified above.

In grant my permission for the [Session of \_\_\_\_\_ or Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_], to whose oversight I am subject, to use the statement of facts to which I have agreed and the confession of guilt which I have made to render a judgment and impose whatever censure or censures the church court considers to be appropriate in my case.

I realize that, though I may not appeal to a higher church court regarding my confession of guilt which I am making (*Book of Church Order* 42-2) because I have not submitted to a regular trial, I do, nevertheless, retain the right to file a complaint regarding the judgment (censure or censures) that this church court may impose (*Book of Church Order* 38-1).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample****Permission Form for a Voluntary Statement in Addition to the Required Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt for a BCO 38-1 Case without Process**

I [insert name] hereby indicate my desire to make a statement to the [Session of \_\_\_\_\_ or Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_], to whose oversight I am subject, for its consideration in determining the censure or censures in my case without process (*Book of Church Order* 38-1). The statement I wish to make is in addition to the statement of facts which I have approved and confession of guilt which I have made in my case without process presently being considered.

Moreover, I give my consent to the church court to which I am subject to use the statements I make in the presence of the court as a basis of judgment without process.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Information for Persons Agreeing to a Case without Process under BCO 38-1<sup>1</sup>

L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk Emeritus, PCA

You have chosen to come forward and make known your offense(s) to the Elders to whom you are spiritually accountable. The following is intended to help you understand what is expected of you, the procedures that will take place and the options available to you and to the Elders functioning as a church court under *Book of Church Order* 38-1.

Be aware of the differences between a Case with Process (undergoing a trial) and a Case without Process.

### Differences between Cases with Process & Cases without Process

- | <b>Cases with Process</b>  | <b>Cases without Process (BCO 38-1)</b>  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>BCO</i> 31-2 investigation resulting in a strong presumption of guilt to a chargeable offense (<i>BCO</i> 29-1).</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person comes forward and makes a “confession of guilt” (Cf. <i>BCO</i> 29-1)</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full trial procedures, process, standards of evidence, prosecutor, defender, witnesses, etc., resulting in a verdict of guilty or not guilty.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No full trial procedures, process, standards of evidence, prosecutor, defender, witnesses, etc., because the person makes a “confession of guilt.”</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon conviction, a guilty person may appeal to a higher court concerning both the guilty verdict and the censure imposed and may cite several bases for appeal (<i>BCO</i> 42-1, 2, 3, and 4).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After the court had rendered a judgment (i.e. imposed a censure), the person may file a complaint concerning the judgment, <i>BCO</i> 38-1; 43-1 (i.e. against censure that was imposed based on his confession of guilt). In making such complaint, he is not retracting his “confession of guilt.”</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice of appeal has effect of suspending the judgment (<i>BCO</i> 42-6), i.e., holding the censure in abeyance until the appeal is settled by the higher court.</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Filing a complaint does <i>not</i> suspend the censure unless the court acts to do so (<i>BCO</i> 43-4).</li> </ul>   |

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<sup>1</sup> ***Book of Church Order* 38-1.** When any person shall come forward and make his offense known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the presence of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process except by his consent. In the event a confession is intended, a written Confession (i.e., a sufficient summary of the facts, the person’s specific confession, and any expression or evidence of repentance) must be approved by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment, and the co-signed document shall be appended to the minutes (regular or executive session). No other information may be presented without written consent from the accused and the court, and this prohibition includes individuals, prosecutors, committees, and commissions. The accused person has the right of complaint against the judgment.

A procedure in a case without process under *BCO* 38-1 is a disciplinary procedure, under the *Book of Church Order*, Part II, the “Rules of Discipline.” This is a serious matter. It is not simply your elders giving you pastoral advice. In coming forward and acknowledging an “offense,” you are not merely saying that you have said or done something that may have caused someone somehow to be offended, or that you simply exercised poor judgment; you are admitting to an offense as defined in the *Book of Church Order*<sup>2</sup>, which is why there is a “confession of guilt.” You are to certify to the church court that you intend to make a confession of guilt.

In a *BCO* 38-1 case without process several items will be used as the bases for the elders to decide whether a censure should be imposed against you and what the censure should be:

1. A Statement of Facts that is required
2. A Confession of Guilt that is required
3. An Additional Statement to the Church Court that you may elect to make.

The church court (the Session for church members or the Presbytery for ministers) will prepare a Statement of Facts regarding the offense(s) concerning which you are making a confession of guilt. In order for the church court to proceed, you will be informed of the Statement of Facts and you will need to approve the Statement of Facts for the records of the church court. The Statement of Facts will list accurately and concisely the actions, statements, or attitudes to which you are making a confession of guilt. It will cite circumstances, events, and dates as may be relevant and appropriate, and it will cite scriptural references or quotations that are applicable, as well as sections of the *Westminster Standards* or the *Book of Church Order* that are applicable. You will be asked to certify that the Statement of Facts is accurate and that you give your permission to the church court to use the Statement of Facts as a basis for imposing a censure.

You will be asked to make a Confession of Guilt for the records of the church court based on the Statement of Facts that lists the specific offenses to which you are admitting guilt. You will be asked to certify to the church court that you intend to make a Confession of Guilt and that you give your permission to the church court to use your Confession of Guilt as a basis for imposing a censure.

In addition to the Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt, which are required, you may want to make an Additional Statement to the Church Court. If you want to make an Additional Statement to the Church Court, you will be asked to certify for the records of the church court that you give the church court permission to use your Additional Statement as basis for a judgment in your case.

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<sup>2</sup> **29-1.** An offense, the proper object of judicial process, is anything in the doctrines or practice of a Church member professing faith in Christ which is contrary to the Word of God. The *Confession of Faith* and the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms* of the Westminster Assembly, together with the formularies of government, discipline, and worship are accepted by the Presbyterian Church in America as standard expositions of the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice. Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by any court as an offense, or admitted as a matter of accusation, which cannot be proved to be such from Scripture



Sometimes Sessions and often Presbyteries have Shepherding Committees or the equivalent that may make a recommendation to the church court regarding whether a censure should be imposed or what the censure should be. The church court will take such recommendations into account but is not required to follow such recommendations.

A basic principle of biblical justice is that the censure(s) should be appropriate to the offense(s). There are several censures available for the church court to impose (see *BCO* Chapter 30, *Church Censures*). These include admonition (a censure available only in the case of repentant persons), definite suspension from office for a specified period of time (if a Deacon, Ruling Elder, or Minister), indefinite suspension from Communion,<sup>3</sup> indefinite suspension from office (if a Deacon, Ruling Elder, or Minister), and deposition from office (if a Deacon, Ruling Elder, or Minister) or also excommunication. Though there are some procedures specified in the *Book of Church Order* 38-1 regarding a case without process, the church court, in deciding whether a censure is needed and what censure or censures to impose, will need to exercise its wisdom and discretion in accordance with the general principles of Scripture and the parameters of the PCA Constitution.

In the case of Ministers some special rules apply (see *BCO* Chapter 34). Since, in some respects, ministers are held to a higher standard, some offenses are more strongly censured (*BCO* 34-7).

Though you are coming forward and making your offense(s) known to the church court, the elders who decide your case will seek to discern whether you are repentant and that have made or are making appropriate restitution when necessary. Repentance involves 1) a sincere admission of and sorrow for sin, 2) a personal appropriation of the grace and mercy of Christ, and 3) a renewed purpose and endeavor to live your life in loving obedience to Christ (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 15-2). Just as the Lord Jesus explained sin to be more than outward actions (for example, Matthew 5:21-48), so the Church understands sin in the same manner. The *Westminster Larger Catechism*'s explanation of the Moral Law will be helpful to you in this regard (*WLC* 91-151).

Just as John preached, “Bear fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matthew 3:8), so the Church calls upon people to “repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance” (Acts 26:20). Making restitution for our sins is not a meritorious work that earns us forgiveness from God or restoration by the Church; it is a means of our demonstrating the genuineness of our repentance and our seeking to repair the damage our sins may have caused. This is why the elders who decide your case will seek to discern whether you are repentant and that have made or are making appropriate restitution when necessary.

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<sup>3</sup> Indefinite suspension from the sacrament or from office is used when the church court does not think that the person is truly repentant and may be lifted when the person comes to repentance. An unrepentant person should not receive communion. There is no censure of definite suspension from communion, since repentant persons may receive communion and communion, properly received, is a means of grace.

Disciplinary procedures are ordinarily held in executive session. This means that if a Session is conducting the case, the only people present are the members of that particular church Session and the person making confession, unless the Session gives specific permission for others to be present. If a Presbytery is conducting the case, the only people present are Ministers who are members of that particular Presbytery, Ruling Elders who have been elected to be commissioners to that particular meeting of the Presbytery, and the person making confession, unless the Presbytery gives specific permission for others to be present. After the Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt are presented, and after the Additional Statement, if any, is made, then you will be dismissed from the room while the church court discusses your case and decides on a censure. You will then be asked to return and you will be informed of the censure.

If after the case is concluded, you think that the censure(s) imposed upon you was (were) disproportionately severe to your offense(s), you may file a complaint with reasons against the judgment (i.e. the censure(s), *BCO* 38-1; *BCO* 43). In so doing you are not retracting the Statement of Facts to which you agreed or the Confession of Guilt which you made, or the Additional Statement you may have made. You are complaining that the censure(s) was (were) too severe. You will need to file your complaint within thirty (30) days of the decision of the church court. File the complaint with the Stated Clerk of the church court that imposed the censure. If church court fails to consider your properly filed complaint by its next stated meeting or denies your complaint, you may carry your complaint forward to the next higher church court.

In exercising discipline the Church, among other things, is concerned for “the spiritual good of offenders themselves” (*BCO* 27-3) and “acts the part of a tender mother, correcting her children for their good, that every one of them may be presented faultless in the day of the Lord Jesus” (*BCO* 27-4). A goal of discipline is the restoration of the offender (*BCO* Chapter 37, *The Removal of Censure*). The Elders of the church court that impose the censure(s) will work with you to bring about the removal of any censure(s) they may consider appropriate to your case, as you make spiritual progress through repentance and your using means of grace (the Word of God, prayer, and Communion) that God has provided for our spiritual benefit.

The Office of the Stated Clerk may give advice and counsel regarding constitutional and procedural matters. Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, “The Rules of Assembly Operation,” “The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission,” and/or *Robert’s Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA or staff members of the Office of the Stated Clerk are for information only, however, and are not authoritative rulings that may only be made by the courts of the Church. Responses to inquiries are based on information supplied by the inquirer, which may not necessarily be comprehensive. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not represent parties in ecclesiastical judicial cases and may not prepare judicial cases for parties. Parties to potential cases or cases in process are responsible for their own constitutional and procedural knowledge and understanding. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not give legal advice. When legal advice is needed, professional legal counsel should be secured from one familiar with applicable laws and regulations.

JOHN P. TUCKER, JR.  
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OF COUNSEL  
JAMES ESTENSON

To:

From: Jim Ostenson

Date: November 30, 1988

Re: Legal considerations in church discipline

1. Of the numerous lawsuits that have been filed by disciplined church members and church staff, there have been four primary causes:

- a. Inconsistency by a church in exercising discipline—disciplining some, while ignoring the discipline of others.
- b. Abuse by churches of the discipline process—spreading gossip, failing to follow established procedures, etc.
- c. Failure by churches to communicate with members about the role of discipline in the life of the church, so that members do not know in advance that they may be subject to discipline.
- d. Society's emphasis on the rights of the individual.

2. There is no guaranteed method of avoiding a lawsuit, but the following are recommendations for churches in practicing church discipline:

- a. Give notice that the church practices discipline
  - (1) In church bylaws.
  - (2) In formal written membership covenants.
  - (3) As part of church membership training – provide a written Biblical statement as part of membership materials.
  - (4) As a subject of preaching and teaching.
- b. Make sure the church is consistent in its practice of discipline, even when a potential case is particularly awkward.
- c. Determine the church's disciplinary procedures in advance of needing to use them. In the Presbyterian Church in America, the Book of Church Order covers all essential procedures. Be sure officers are familiar with the steps outlined there, and that they study them thoroughly before beginning a disciplinary matter.

- d. In handling a disciplinary case, stress accuracy. Basing actions on assumptions and impressions will lead to trouble.
- e. If legal action is threatened by the member charged, consult a Christian attorney to review the procedures the church is following before proceeding.
- f. Limit the “audience” to the “community of interest”. Unnecessary publication of the disciplinary matter is unethical and can lead to lawsuits. The Book of Church Order gives church courts discretion as to public announcements of church discipline. If the court decides to announce the discipline to the membership, the following are recommended guidelines:
  - (1) Hold a closed congregational meeting. Ask all visitors to leave
  - (2) Read a brief statement from the Session which has been written ahead of time and deals with the case only generally, not in specific detail. Do not mention other individuals, who, while perhaps involved in the matter, were not members of the church subject to discipline.
  - (3) Discreetly tape record the meeting so there is a record of what was said. Also, keep a copy of the written statement that was read.
  - (4) After reading a brief statement which focuses on Biblical reason for the discipline, lead the congregation in prayer for the individuals(s) involved and the church as a whole. Be sure that the scope of information disclosed is limited. It is not necessary to identify the specific sin involved --a reference to “unrepentant sin” might suffice.
- g. Make certain there are not written announcements regarding the disciplinary matter. Never mention church discipline in a church newsletter or bulletin. Even a letter sent out to church members could potentially get into the hands of a non-member and could lead to a charge of “invasion of privacy” or one of the other claims being used by those suing their church.
- h. Maintain an attitude of planning your procedures in advance rather than just reacting to problems that develop. In the care of Christ’s Church, there will inevitably be difficulties, but He will honor efforts to maintain the purity of His Bride.
- i. More than anything else, do church discipline “by the Book”. Follow Scripture and the Book of Church Order meticulously. Many problems in discipline cases can be traced to church officers getting creative and ignoring established procedures.

\*Note: Law firm is now William B. Hollberg, 1819 Peachtree Rd. NE, Atlanta, GA 30303,  
Phone number 404-760-1116

## BIBLICAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION (BCO Appendix I)

### Preface

As we continue to seek to become a church holy before God, the manner in which we respond to sin and conflicts in the body, and gently shepherd those caught in sin, will reflect our commitment to the authority of God's Word and the spirit of love, which should define all of our actions and relationships. Biblical peacemaking is one of God's highest priorities (Matt. 5:23-24; Rom. 12:18; Gal. 6:1); therefore, it must be one of our highest priorities. The *Book of Church Order (BCO)* reflects our commitment to following God's procedure for reclaiming those going astray. It says, "Scriptural law is the basis of all discipline because it is the revelation of God's Holy will. Proper disciplinary principles are set forth in the Scriptures and must be followed" (BCO 27-5). It also says, "An injured party shall not become a prosecutor of personal offenses without having tried the means of reconciliation and of reclaiming the offender, required by Christ" (BCO 31-5). The purpose of this Appendix [of the BCO] is to provide guidance through the steps of biblical peacemaking required as pre-conditions to judicial process in cases of personal offense (BCO 31-5), and for use whenever possible in cases of general offense (BCO 31-7).

Each presbytery should endeavor to have several elders trained in the methods of "Christian conciliation" (including mediation and arbitration), and available to serve as Christian conciliators in cases that could and should be resolved privately before judicial process is initiated. We would do well to follow the wisdom of those who have considered the importance of this matter. For example, Elder Edmond Clowney states, "Discipline...is not first an exercise of negative judgment, a matter of church courts and censures. It begins with the care of friends with whom we strive to follow Christ" (Clowney, E.P., *The Church*, IVP, 1995).

### The Biblical Steps of Discipline as they Relate to Biblical Peacemaking

BCO 27-5 outlines the proper principles for the exercise of church discipline. This BCO section emphasizes that the steps indicated, (a) through (d), must be followed in proper order. The steps are:

- a) Instruction in the Word;
- b) An individual's responsibility to admonish one another (Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1);
- c) If the admonition is rejected, then the calling of one or more witnesses (Matt. 18:16);
- d) If rejection persists, then the church must act through her court unto admonition, suspension, excommunication and deposition.

This Appendix [of the BCO] addresses the first three steps, (a) through (c), by providing an expanded discussion of the implications raised by Scriptural direction for a complete process at each step. Step (d), formal church discipline, is addressed by Part II of the *Book of Church Order*, The Rules of Discipline.

#### 1. The first step - Instruction in the Word.

Many Christians do not fully understand the emphasis God places on living at peace and in unity with others (Eph. 4: 3). Preaching and teaching should regularly address this emphasis and the purposes for church discipline as set forth in BCO 27-3 and BCO 27-4. Attention should be drawn to the fact that the main procedural passage related to church discipline, Matthew 18:15-20, is set forth in the context of two powerful parables teaching the extent and depth of God's love in reclaiming those who have strayed (Matt. 18:10-14), and the vast measure of His forgiveness and the expansive forgiveness He expects from His children toward one another (Matt. 18:21-

35). The extent of instruction on reconciliation provided to church members in “new member classes” and regular preaching from the pulpit will have a significant bearing on the extent to which a church member understands the benefits of church discipline and has consented to ecclesiastical jurisdiction (which is helpful for the church if it is to avoid legal liability for the proper exercise of church discipline).

Teaching God’s Word concerning sin, and conflicts that result from it, and how Christians should respond biblically to conflict, will equip church members to become peacemakers themselves. Peacemaking has always been one of a Christian’s most important ministries. As we are reminded in 2 Corinthians 5:18, God “reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” One of the most powerful ways that we can encourage reconciliation with God is to model reconciliation among people. When others see us resolve our differences in a loving and biblical manner, they are inclined to give more weight to what we say about the Lord (John 13:34-35; 17:20-23). On the other hand, when they see Christians embroiled in disputes, they tend to write God’s people off as hypocrites and dismiss the claims of Christ (Rom. 2:21-24; 1 Cor. 6:1-8).

The Bible sets forth a process for resolving personal and substantive disputes in a constructive manner. This process is sometimes referred to as “Christian conciliation” and it may be used to resolve everything from minor personal differences to church divisions or lawsuits involving church members. As indicated in passages such as Proverbs 19:11, Matthew 5:23-25 and 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, and Galatians 6:1, conciliation involves three basic steps: (1) when Christians are involved in a conflict that is too serious to overlook, the first thing that they should do is **meet together privately and in person** to try to resolve their differences; (2) if this effort is unsuccessful, they should ask one or more other Christians to meet with them and help them to seek reconciliation and a voluntary settlement of their differences (a process sometimes referred to as **mediation**); and (3) if they cannot arrive at a voluntary settlement, they should ask one or more other Christians to hear both sides of the matter and render a biblically based decision that both sides are obligated to accept (a process sometimes referred to as **arbitration**).

There are many benefits to resolving disputes through Christian conciliation. It prevents a public quarrel that would dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ and diminish the credibility and witness of His church. Conciliation also allows Christians to demonstrate their faith in Christ and their confidence in His teachings (John 13:34; 14:15; 17:20-23). In addition, conciliation encourages forgiveness and promotes reconciliation, which can help to preserve valuable relationships and strengthen the church (Eph. 4:29-32; Col. 3:12-17). Conciliation also helps people to identify and deal with the root causes of conflict, which may include such things as pride, selfishness, fear, vengeance, greed, bitterness, or unforgiveness (see Matt. 7:3-5). This allows people to make changes in their lives so that they will enjoy more peaceful relationships in the future (Eph. 4:1-3, 22-24).

Christian conciliation is especially beneficial for people who sincerely want to do what is right and are open to learning where they have been wrong (Prov. 15:31-32). Conciliators can help them to identify improper attitudes or unwise practices, to understand more fully the effects of their decision and actions, and to make improvements in their lives that will help them to honor and serve the Lord more effectively in the future (1 Peter 2:12).

Teaching and Ruling elders are encouraged to learn all they can about Christian conciliation and develop local ministries that will equip members under their care to respond to conflicts in a manner that reflects the power of Christ working in their lives.

The more church members understand these concepts and benefits, the more likely they will be to apply biblical principles when conflicts occur.

**2. The second step - An individual's responsibility to admonish another** (Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1). Scripture warns against making a premature judgment about a matter (Matt. 7:1-5). By first going personally and in private to those who have offended, we provide the opportunity for clarification of misunderstandings and avoid premature judgment. This step includes the three responses of personal peacemaking as follows:

Overlook an offense: An individual may overlook an offense of another if it is minor in nature and it has not significantly dishonored God, damaged a personal relationship, or hurt other people (including the offender). "A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense" (Prov. 19:11).

Discussion: When personal wrongs are too serious to overlook, the parties are required to seek to resolve them privately through loving confrontation and confession. "If your brother has something against you...go and be reconciled" (Matt. 5:23-24). "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you" (Matt. 18:15).

Negotiation: When a substantive issue related to money, property, or other material issues or rights divides Christians, a process of biblical negotiation should be followed that will meet the interests of all those involved. "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:4).

Privately responding to conflict early, before it escalates, through the means of these three forms of personal peacemaking will often result in reconciliation and no need for further peacemaking attention. Successful personal peacemaking is usually based on at least one parties' willingness to accept responsibility for how they have contributed to the conflict and by being willing to humble themselves for the greater goal of God's glory through "making every effort" (Eph. 4:3) to keep the unity of the spirit.

**3. The third step - If private admonition is rejected, then calling of one or more witnesses** (Matt. 18:16; 1 Cor. 6:1-9). Involving others is a serious escalation of a conflict and should be considered only after the elements of step two have been fully exhausted. Step three includes the three assisted peacemaking responses as follows:

Mediation: If a dispute cannot be resolved through personal peacemaking, the parties should ask one or more other Christians to meet with them to help the parties communicate more effectively and explore possible solutions. The mediators may give advice but have no power to impose solutions. They may later act as witnesses in formal church disciplinary proceedings, should mediation fail due to hardness of heart or the unrepentant sin of one or both parties. "If he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." (Matt. 18:16).

Arbitration: When two parties to a conflict cannot come to a voluntary agreement on a substantive issue, one or more arbitrators may be appointed to listen to the arguments and evidence of each side and render a binding decision. "If you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church" (1 Cor. 6:1-8).

Church Discipline: Formal church discipline, pursuant to the procedures of *BCO* Part II, is reserved for those cases where the person who professes to be a Christian refuses to be reconciled, repent of personal sin, and do what is right. Church leaders bearing ecclesiastical jurisdiction over such persons should formally intervene to promote justice, repentance, and forgiveness. "If he refuses to listen, tell it to the church" (Matt. 18:17-20).

### **Application of the Principles**

Judicial cases that come to the attention of church courts frequently begin as personal disputes between two or more individuals. Typically, when one side feels they are not getting what they want, they bring charges of sin against the other side. In this manner, sessions and presbyteries are drawn into conflicts that would better be resolved at a personal level through Christian conciliation. Of course, when conflicted parties refuse to be reconciled, the accountability afforded by formal church discipline should be used to further the goals of purity in the church, the rebuke of offenses, the removal of scandal, and the spiritual good of offenders (1 Cor. 5:5). Every effort should be made, however, to resolve the conflict through repentance, confession, forgiveness and reconciliation before formal charges are entertained by a church court. The intent of the relevant *BCO* provisions is to encourage Christian unity before the formal provisions of church discipline are brought to bear on a situation. Of course, not every situation will lend itself to Christian conciliation. However, every effort should be made to utilize private confrontation, mediation, and arbitration in order to reserve the use of formal church discipline, and the time of church courts, for those matters related to the purity of the church and the keeping and reclaiming of disobedient sinners (*BCO* 27-3). Many of these ends will be realized through the processes of Christian conciliation and, therefore, should be viewed as prerequisite procedures to the formal disciplinary process.

### **Failure to Follow the Steps**

Churches unwilling or unable to instruct their members completely in the full breadth of the steps of conciliation and discipline encourage resorting to unbiblical, worldly responses to conflict. The escape responses of denial, flight, and even suicide can be expected if church members are not positively directed to the biblical processes of Christian conciliation. Others, when not given the hope of having matters responded to within the body of Christ, will resort to civil litigation, verbal and physical attack, and possibly even murder to remove an opponent where there is no avenue for a just resolution.

Moving a case too quickly to formal church discipline can build barriers that could otherwise be dealt with in mediation or arbitration. Every church and presbytery is encouraged to equip elders and mature members with the skills of Christian conciliation, and to exhaust conciliation processes and remedies before moving to formal church discipline.



### Use of Conciliation Clauses in Membership Documents

One significant way church members can be educated and prepared for biblical conflict resolution is through the use of a conciliation clause in the membership covenant or other agreement signed by new members when they join the church. The recommended language for this clause is set forth below. It should be noted that signing this clause cannot be made a condition for membership, but may be encouraged as a voluntary biblical commitment. It should be clearly offered as an optional statement for the resolution of any disputes that may arise.

#### Christian Conciliation

*Members are encouraged but not required to make this additional commitment.*

If I ever have a dispute with the church that cannot be resolved through its own internal procedures, I agree to resolve the dispute according to biblical principles (such as those set forth in Matthew 5:23-25 and 18:15-20, and 1 Corinthians 6:1-8) by submitting the matter to mediation and, if necessary, arbitration, according to the Bylaws of this church and the *Rules of Procedure* of the Institute for Christian Conciliation. I understand that arbitration is a legally binding process, and that judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's or Guardian's Name    Parent's or Guardian's Signature  
(for minors)

THIS AGREEMENT IS SUBJECT TO ARBITRATION PURSUANT TO THE  
[STATE] ARBITRATION ACT, TITLE ##, CHAPTER #, [STATE] CODE  
ANNOTATED.

### **Amend Church Bylaws to Allow Continuing Church Jurisdiction**

The following clause is recommended for inclusion in local church bylaws to allow the continuing ecclesiastical jurisdiction over a member who may otherwise simply flee from the church to avoid biblical discipline:

Members may be removed from membership at their own request following the steps of appropriate pastoral care as set forth in *BCO* 38-4. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with the church, the Session shall attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the church and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal spiritual growth. If the Session is unable to resolve those matters, it shall offer to assist the member in locating a church of like faith and practice that can respond more effectively to his gifts and needs. If it appears to the Session that a member has requested removal merely to avoid church discipline, that request shall not be given effect until the disciplinary process has been properly concluded.

Use of this clause will also help the church avoid serious legal liability for following through with all of the steps of church discipline. Members should be informed of its provisions and carefully taught the Scriptural basis for continuing shepherding and pastoral care especially when caught in sin (see also *BCO* 38-3 and 38-4).

### **Conclusion**

The courts of the church are encouraged to employ the means of Christian conciliation whenever possible. That is, churches and presbyteries are encouraged to defer judicial action until all other remedies have been exhausted. Peace, unity, and the mission of the Church can be furthered through careful and complete attention to every step of the process as set forth in *BCO* 27-5 as understood through the expanded guidance concerning Christian conciliation as set forth above.

## LIABILITY IN HIRING

***In a court case adjudicated by a State Court of Appeals, the Court concluded that claims in question could be resolved by application of neutral principles of civil law and, therefore, that the trial court does have subject-matter jurisdiction in an ecclesiastical matter.***

In the case under consideration, the plaintiff was allegedly defrauded and seduced by her pastor and appealed the trial court's dismissal of the complaint against the General Board of the Church, (i.e. General Assembly, GA), and the District Church (i.e. Regional Presbytery). The trial court concluded that it lacked subject-matter jurisdiction because the case against the Board and the District would involve inquiry into the ecclesiastical doctrine, law, and polity of the Church, in violation of the doctrine of ecclesiastical abstention. It was concluded that the claims in question could be resolved by application of neutral principles of civil law and, therefore, that the trial court does have subject-matter jurisdiction.

The plaintiff's amended complaint alleged that the Board and District were guilty of negligent hiring, negligent supervision, negligent retention, and negligence under a theory of respondeat superior, intentional infliction of emotional distress, securities fraud, constructive fraud, and racketeering. Named defendants also included the local church, a church employee, the senior pastor, the executive pastor, and several companies on whose behalf the pastor, and the pastor's brother allegedly solicited investment funds to the plaintiff. The Board (GA) and the District (Regional Presbytery) were the only defendants involved in this appeal.

According to the complaint, at or about the time these defendants hired the staff member (pastor), they had credible information that he had a history of stealing money from, improperly soliciting investments from, and engaging in sexual misconduct with church members in other states. The complaint also alleged that, when the Church was informed that the pastor and the staff member were soliciting money from church members, the Church vouched for the pastor and conducted no investigation despite having knowledge of his reputation and history.

The complaint also alleged that the pastor engaged in sexual relations with the plaintiff by using his position as pastor and spiritual advisor to exert emotional and physical control over her in an attempt to defraud her of money.

In their answer, the Board and District denied that the court had subject-matter jurisdiction, denied having control over the business affairs of the Church, and denied hiring the pastor. The Board (GA) and the District (Regional Presbytery) filed separate Motions to Dismiss.

The Board's motion argued that the doctrine of ecclesiastical abstention required dismissal of the lawsuit against the Board under the State's Rules of Civil Procedure. Citing the "Manual of the Church" (i.e. BCO), and attaching several pages of the Manual to its motion, the Board explained that the church is a hierarchical church composed of three independent authorities: the local churches, the district assemblies, and the General Assembly, over which preside the Board. The Board contended that the authority of the General Assembly, and therefore of the Board, was limited to making rules and regulations for departments related to the church, organizing the membership of the church into district assemblies, determining the qualifications of district assembly representatives and the boundaries of assembly districts, and defining the powers of the district assemblies. The Board maintained that it had no control over and no knowledge of the operations of local churches. The Board argued that, under the ecclesiastical abstention doctrine, civil courts must accept the provisions of the "Manual" and are precluded from inquiring further.

The District's motion to dismiss argued that the court lacked subject-matter jurisdiction under the First Amendment and the doctrine of ecclesiastical abstention. Also citing the "Manual", the District stated that the church was an independent entity that had the right to select and hire its own pastor, manage its own financial affairs, and control its own local work. According to the District, local churches report their activities to the District annually, but the District does not hire or discharge local pastors or staff members or set their duties. The District alleged that its only contact with the pastor was in granting him the status of licensed minister for the church, which authorized him to preach the Word, to administer sacraments, and to officiate at marriages.

The District (Presbytery) asserted that it approved or disapproved of a local church's selection of pastor based on an ecclesiastical review. The senior pastor was required to report annually to the District; other on the staff of the local church reported to the senior pastor. The District would review the status of licensed ministers annually for renewal of the license. Otherwise, the District exercised oversight with respect to its ministers only upon complaint by a church member.

The District argued that, because its role was limited to licensing the pastor, any inquiry into the District's involvement in the case would necessarily require a review of the ecclesiastical doctrine of the church regarding licensing ministers, a matter over which, it asserted, the courts have no jurisdiction.

The plaintiff responded that the complaint did not involve ecclesiastical issues; it involved a determination whether the Board and the District breached a secular duty by hiring and licensing the pastor despite knowledge of his prior victimization of parishioners. The plaintiff also argued that the "Manual" was outside the pleadings, and requested a continuance to conduct further discovery if the court considered the "Manual" in reaching its decision. The plaintiff argued that attempts to depose the Board and the District had been unsuccessful and that the plaintiff expected that the depositions would demonstrate that both the Board and the District had in fact been involved in hiring the pastor.

The court ruled that the "Manual" set out the duties of the Church, the District, and the Board, and that any review of the District's and the Board's role in the case "would necessarily require a review of the ecclesiastical doctrine, law and polity of the Church (denomination) as it relates to granting licenses to ministers". The court concluded that the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, and the doctrine of ecclesiastical abstention precluded such an inquiry. The court granted the Board's and the District's motions to dismiss, and it denied the plaintiff's motion, finding that the requested discovery would not "defeat the basis of the Court's granting dismissal".

The Appeals court further said, civil courts must accept "the decisions of the highest judicatories of a religious organization of hierarchical polity on matters of discipline, faith, internal organization, or ecclesiastical rule, custom, or law". However, when a church-related dispute can be resolved by applying neutral principles of law without inquiry into religious doctrine and without resolving a religious controversy, the civil courts may adjudicate the dispute.

Because religious organizations are part of the civil community, they are subject to societal rules governing property rights, torts, and criminal conduct. The First Amendment does not excuse individuals or religious groups from complying with valid neutral laws.

The question in this present case is whether the civil court can adjudicate claims against certain officials of a religious organization based on their alleged licensing and hiring of a

pastor whom they knew, or had reason to know, was likely to victimize members of that organization. Courts addressing this kind of issue have reached various conclusions.

In the present case, the plaintiff claims injury by the tortuous conduct of individuals whom church officials placed in a position to injure her when they knew, or should have known, of the risk of harm presented by those individuals. In our opinion, the Appeals' court resolution of these claims does not require the interpretation of religious doctrine or ecclesiastical law; it requires application of tort law principles that are neutral and generally applicable.

The Board contends that, even if neutral principles of tort law applied, the court would still have to examine the structure of the Church (Denomination) to properly define the duties of the various defendants. Maybe so, but the court can examine the structure of a religious organization for such a purpose. A court may examine religious documents so long as it is done in purely secular terms. Any inquiry into the structure of the religious organization would not be undertaken to resolve any internal organizational dispute or the appropriateness of the conduct of the parties in relation to their religious beliefs or obligations. Inquiry into the organizational structure would be to factually determine the roles the parties played in the licensing and hiring of an employee.

The District (Presbytery) argues that the plaintiff seeks to have it assert control over local churches and pastors in contradiction to the polity of the Church (denomination), which precludes interference with the local church by the District. Plaintiff's claims are not that broad. Also note that the "Manual" provides for the possibility of a district superintendent disapproving a proposed pastor to a local church. Consequently, the application of neutral tort principles in this case does not conflict with the polity of the Church.

The parties here have not specifically addressed individual claims at this stage of the litigation. Because the Board and District presented a general challenge to the court's jurisdiction to consider the case, we have addressed the matter generally.

Because of our resolution of the jurisdiction issue, we do not decide whether the trial court abused its discretion when denying the plaintiff's motion, or when including (Rule) language in its dismissal order.

It is concluded that the trial court erred in concluding that it lacked subject-matter jurisdiction to adjudicate any of the plaintiff's claims against the Board and the District. The judgment of dismissal is therefore reversed and the matter is remanded to the trial court for further proceedings.

*Synopsis by PCA Stated Clerk's Office, 12/4/02*

*Court of Appeals, State of Arizona, Rashedi v. General Bd of Church of the Nazarene, 9-19-02*

### UPDATE OF PCA CHURCH RECORDS In the Stated Clerk's Office

This document gives an overview of the update process used by the Stated Clerk's Office to develop the two publications that provide information about the denomination, and how you as presbytery clerks are involved in the process. The dates shown are based on normal production schedules and current staff resources.

Document	Published	Update method	Input Needed By
<b>Directory</b> (blue)	Beginning of calendar year	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. FYI only - Postcard sent to all churches asking for name/address changes (late August).</li> <li>2. Clerks notify Stated Clerk's office of pastoral changes (via Clerks Web site or e-mail to records).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Early October</li> <li>2. Early October (Pastoral changes are accepted only from presbytery clerks.)</li> </ol>
<b>Yearbook</b> (gray, 2 Vols.)	Late Spring	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. FYI - Ministerial Bio update letter sent to TEs in mid-September; Data posted on web for review.</li> <li>2. Presbytery packets sent to clerks in early November. Clerks update information (rolls, committee chairmen, officers, candidates, licentiates, standing meetings) via Clerks Web site or e-mail to records.</li> <li>3. Stats forms sent to churches early December. Clerks remind churches to respond.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mid-November for Ministerial Bio changes</li> <li>2. Early December or at Clerks Conference</li> <li>3. Mid-February</li> </ol>

## **STATISTICAL FORM & COMPENSATION STUDY**

In December a packet of forms and instructions for collecting statistical information about the PCA is mailed to churches. On the average, approximately 2/3 of PCA churches complete these forms and return them. Presbytery Clerks are asked to encourage churches in the presbytery to complete and return these forms.

If desired, the information may be accessed and input via online Stat Forms at [www.pcaac.org/stats](http://www.pcaac.org/stats). The online system for stats is password protected because the information specific to a church is accessible. The ORG ID # and Password needed to access the system is printed on the hard copy which is mailed out to the churches.

The information gathered is compiled, analyzed and published in the *Yearbook* of the Presbyterian Church in America, and is also available digitally online. The *Yearbook* is sold through the PCA Bookstore.

For a sample of the "Stat Packet" please email [ederr@pcanet.org](mailto:ederr@pcanet.org). Churches or persons having questions about the forms, instructions, passwords or process involved may contact Mrs. Erika Derr in the Stated Clerk's Office, [ederr@pcanet.org](mailto:ederr@pcanet.org).

## SESSION RECORDS

**The Stated Clerk's Office offers a Handbook for Session Clerks for download on our website here: <http://www.pcaac.org/presbyterydownloads/>**

Nothing in the *BCO* addresses the duties of the Clerk of the Session other than *BCO* 12 (specifically 12-6, 7, 8). *Robert's Rules of Order, 10th Edition*, page 531, "The secretary [clerk] is elected viva voce in the same manner as the chairman. When the secretary has been elected, he should take his seat near the chairman and keep a record of the proceedings."

### I. DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY/CLERK [from *RRO, 10th Edition*, page 442-3]

1. To keep a record of all the proceedings of the organization--usually called the *minutes*.
2. To keep on file all committee reports.
3. To keep the organization's official membership roll (unless another officer or staff member has this duty); and to call the roll where it is required.
4. To make the minutes and records available to members upon request (see below)
5. To notify officers, committee members, and delegates of their election or appointment, to furnish committees with whatever documents are required for the performance of their duties, and to have on hand at each meeting a list of all existing committees and their members.
6. To furnish delegates with credentials.
7. To sign all certified copies of acts of the society, unless otherwise specified in the bylaws.
8. To maintain record book(s) in which the bylaws, special rules of order, standing rules, and minutes are entered, with any amendments to these documents properly recorded, and to have the current record book(s) on hand at every meeting. [Sessional Record Books can be obtained from the Christian Education Bookstore, 1-800-283-1357, [www.cepbookstore.com](http://www.cepbookstore.com). They contain acid free paper for archive purposes.]
9. To send out to the membership a notice of each meeting, known as the *call* of the meeting, and to conduct the general correspondence of the organization--that is, correspondence that is not a function proper to other offices or to committees.
10. To prepare, prior to each meeting, an order of business for the use of the presiding officer, showing in their exact order, under the correct headings, all matters known in advance that are due to come up and--if applicable--the times for which they are set.
11. In the absence of the president and vice-president, to call the meeting to order and preside until the immediate election of a chairman pro tem.

### II. GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING AND EXAMINING SESSION MINUTES

"Minutes" are a permanent record in an orderly form.

#### PERMANENT

- All minutes should be typed or legibly written in ink.
- All minutes should be kept in a bound volume for permanent record with the name of the Church appearing on the cover of the volume. Loose-leaf notebook is acceptable.

#### RECORD

- Include the date of celebration of the Lord's Supper, record of baptisms, the manner of reception and dismissal of members. If a member is dropped from the rolls, the Clerk must state the reason and refer to the appropriate article in the *BCO* (*BCO* 12-5).



- A copy of the annual budget approved by the Session and the annual statistical report should be attached annually (*BCO* 12-5).
- Joint meetings of the Session and Diaconate should be recorded, keeping in mind that no joint actions can be taken (*BCO* 9-4) and that notations should be made when the Session approves the minutes of the Diaconate (*BCO* 9-4; 12-5).
- The minutes should include the names of delegates to Presbytery or General Assembly as well as the report they make to the Session after Presbytery or General Assembly (*BCO* 12-5).

#### ORDERLY

- Every Session must meet at least once quarterly (*BCO* 12-6) and submit their minutes annually for Presbytery's review (*BCO* 12-7).
- Follow Parliamentary procedure in accordance with *The Book of Church Order* and *Robert's Rules of Order* as approved by the General Assembly.
- Each action should be put in the form of a motion, with a second and notation of whether the motion passed or failed. The Clerk should not write his personal opinion in the minutes, but notes may be made for historical purposes.
- The minutes of each meeting should be approved at that meeting or at the following meeting. This should be done by way of a motion.
- The Clerk must sign each set of Session minutes. Congregational meetings' minutes must be included and signed by the Moderator and the elected Clerk.

#### FORM

- Opening - At every meeting the Clerk should record the date, time, and place of the meeting, the names of those present, absent, and excused. The names of visitors should be recorded. The Clerk should note whether a given meeting is Stated or Called.
- Pages should be consecutively numbered, leaving no blank pages between meetings and no records left unattached.
- The minutes are to show that the meeting was opened and closed with prayer (*BCO* 12-9).
- Presbytery's Committee to Examine Session Minutes shall report its findings using the terminology employed by the General Assembly in its *Rules for Assembly Operations (RAO)*, Article 16 (exceptions of form and exceptions of substance), and Sessions shall respond to exceptions of substance Presbytery finds by the same procedure specified in the *RAO*.

## REVIEWERS REPORT FORM FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF SESSIONAL RECORDS

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer either "yes" or "no" in the first blank and record page numbers where applicable in the second blank. Make two (2) copies. The original is inserted in the Session Minutes Book, and the copy is kept by the Committee on Court Duties.

NAME OF CHURCH \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed pages \_\_\_\_\_ thru \_\_\_\_\_. Reviewed Period (dates) \_\_\_\_\_ thru \_\_\_\_\_.

	Y/N	PAGE # (S)
1. Church name appears on the outside of the front cover.	_____	_____
2. "Guidelines for Keeping Session Minutes" posted inside front cover.	_____	_____
3. A. The pages are numbered.	_____	_____
B. Each page contains information (no blanks).	_____	_____
4. A. The date of each meeting is recorded.	_____	_____
B. The place of each meeting is recorded.	_____	_____
C. The type (stated or called) of each meeting is recorded.	_____	_____
5. A. Record of quorum present at each meeting (BCO 12-1,7)	_____	_____
B. There is a record of the names of those present or absent.	_____	_____
C. There is a record of invitation to seat non-members.	_____	_____
6. A. When the pastor (moderator) was absent, there is a record of appointment of a moderator. (BCO 12-2, 3)	_____	_____
B. When the clerk of session was absent, record election of acting clerk.	_____	_____
7. A. Each meeting was opened with prayer. (BCO 12-9)	_____	_____
B. Each meeting was closed with prayer. (BCO 12-9)	_____	_____
8. A. When new members are enrolled, there is a record of how received (profession of faith, transfer of letter, or re-affirmation of faith).	_____	_____
B. When new members are enrolled by transfer of letter, there is a record of the name and location of the church from which they came.	_____	_____
C. When members are dismissed, there is a record of the name and location of the church to which they were transferred.	_____	_____
9. A. Record of election of ruling elder commissioner(s) to Stated Presbytery meetings. (January, April, July, October)	_____	_____
B. Record of reports to Session by commissioners to Presbytery. (January, April, July, October)	_____	_____
10. A. Record of election of commissioner(s) to General Assembly. (June)	_____	_____
B. Record of report to session by commissioner to General Assembly.	_____	_____
11. Record of an annual (quarterly or monthly) examination of the minutes of the Board of Deacons. (BCO 9-4)	_____	_____
12. Record of Session approval of annual statistical report.	_____	_____
13. Record of stated times the Lord's Supper was observed during the year. (BCO 58-1)	_____	_____
14. A. Record of the Call and Purpose of each congregational meeting.	_____	_____
B. Record of names of officers elected, their examination and/or date to be installed.	_____	_____

15. Minutes of any ordination and/or installation services as Called meetings of \_\_\_\_\_  
the Session in the presence of the congregation for the officers elected by  
the congregation.
16. A. Signature of moderator at the end of minutes. \_\_\_\_\_  
B. Signature of the clerk of session at the end of minutes. \_\_\_\_\_
17. Session held at least four stated meetings during the year (*BCO* 12-6) \_\_\_\_\_
18. In a judicial case before the Session, there is a record of full  
proceedings as required in the rules of discipline. (*BCO*, Part II) \_\_\_\_\_
19. Note of its annual review and accuracy, of its record of "baptism of  
communing members, of non-communing members, and of deaths  
and dismission of church members." (*BCO* 12-8) \_\_\_\_\_
20. Minutes of previous meetings were read and approved by Session. \_\_\_\_\_
21. OTHER COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

## **SAMPLE STANDING RULES FOR SESSIONAL AND MISSION CHURCH RECORDS**

### **CHAPTER 14 - SESSIONAL RECORDS AND MISSION CHURCH RECORDS**

- 14.1 The Stated Clerk shall annually notify each organized church to submit records for review according to the system of rotation adopted by the Presbytery.
- 14.2 The Clerk of Session shall keep a permanent consecutive record apart from the minutes of:
  - 1. Members: when and how enrolled, when and how dropped from the roll
  - 2. Baptisms: infant and adult
  - 3. Deaths of members
- 14.3 The Session shall meet at least once each quarter (*BCO* 12-6).
- 14.4 Mission churches shall present records to presbytery at least every six months for review. Mission churches shall keep a roll of all communicant and non-communicant members. Each Mission church shall keep basic statistics on members, baptisms, weddings and funerals and brief minutes of meetings showing significant motions. The Mission church shall present a quarterly report to Presbytery's MNA Committee. Copies of the PCA Annual Statistical Report shall also be included at the end of each year to verify membership totals and financial records.
- 14.5 **Guidelines for keeping church minutes:**

Minutes shall be kept by the Clerk of Session, must be typed or legibly handwritten in ink, on pages numbered consecutively. Erasures, inserts and footnotes shall be avoided as much as possible. Since the record must last for many years, minutes shall be kept in a bound or lock-type book, not a loose-leaf binder, because pages can get lost.

- 1. To conform to *BCO* requirements and Presbytery rules, minutes shall specify kind of meeting (stated or called). Also show name of church, date, time and place of meeting and who opened and closed the meeting with prayer.
- 2. List names of moderator, elders present and absent, plus any visitors. Care should be taken that a quorum is present. If Clerk of Session was absent, show name of Clerk Pro-Tem.
- 3. Show that minutes were approved, not later than the next stated meeting, and date approved. *Robert's Rules* suggest this format: MINUTES APPROVED, DATE\_\_\_\_\_, Clerk's initials \_\_\_\_\_.

4. Show actions, motions adopted, business transacted. Names of mover may be recorded but seconder of motions should not be shown. Lost motions need not be recorded.
5. Clerk shall sign minutes. Moderator need not sign unless minutes are for a trial.
6. Names of commissioners to Presbytery and General Assembly shall be shown, with their brief report after attending.
7. Clerk shall keep an accurate record of baptisms, communicant members received and dismissed, deaths, removals, names of members transferred in or out. The minister shall keep a record of names of people he marries.
9. Minutes shall be approved before review by Presbytery.
10. At end of each year, a copy of the Statistical Report to General Assembly shall be inserted, plus a summary of actions taken at congregational meetings, unless minutes include congregational meetings.

#### 14.6 Guidelines for examination of sessional records:

Church Name and City \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Review \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer shall fill out two copies of form provided by Clerk of Presbytery: One for Clerk of Presbytery, and the other to be inserted in Session's book (*BCO* 40-3). On last page of minutes reviewed, Presbytery should mark the book with date of review and whether it approves or disapproves the records with Notations or Exceptions. List any comments on the report below:

1. The following should be present: date, time, place of meeting, and kind of meeting: stated or called.
2. Session should meet at least quarterly (*BCO* 12-6).
3. The names of members present, and members absent with and without excuse and visitors should be recorded. Minutes should show a quorum is present, either by the list of attendees or by a statement (*BCO* 12-1).
4. The meeting should be opened and closed with prayer (*BCO* 10-5, 12-9).
5.
  - a. The Minutes should include approval of records of past proceedings.
  - b. The Minutes should include a record of communication and supporting documents deemed necessary by the session.
  - c. The Minutes should include all committee reports and supporting documents deemed necessary by the session.

6. Minutes should show actions, motions adopted, business transacted.
7. The Minutes should include the names of members received and dismissed, together with the names of baptized children of parents received or dismissed. The Minutes should record baptisms, Lord's Supper, marriages and deaths in the congregation. The church should keep a consecutive roll of all communicant members and their baptized children including dates members were received, and whether by profession, reaffirmation of faith, or transfer.
8. The Minutes should include the election of representatives to Presbytery and General Assembly and whether attended and reported afterwards.
9. Session examines, ordains, and installs ruling elders and deacons (*BCO* 12-5).
10. The Minutes should include the calling of congregational meetings.
11. The Minutes should include annual statistical reports to Presbytery.
12. The Session should maintain a separate compilation of minutes and records of congregational meetings or if incorporated in the regular record, should be plainly so labeled.
13. Deacons should regularly submit minutes and financial records to Session (*BCO* 9-4).
14. The Session approves and adopts the church budget (*BCO* 12-5).
15. Minutes should include the signature of the clerk and moderator of the meeting.
16. The Minutes shall be kept in compliance to all related rules in the *Book of Church Order*, including submitting of minutes for review once a year (*BCO* 12-7).
17. The Minutes shall be kept in a bound or lock-type book with numbered pages; not a loose leaf binder, because pages can get lost.
18. This checklist shall be maintained with the sessional minutes as a guide for the clerk of session.

## PRESBYTERY CLERKS SALARY SURVEY

STATED CLERKS OF PRESBYTERY  
(23 Respondents--8 do not receive a salary)

### SALARY STUDY:

**Top 7 range:** \$4,000--8,000 per year  
**The middle 8 range:** \$1200-3600 per year  
 1 presbytery pays \$10 per hour.  
 (Most presbyteries cover expenses and the annual stated clerks meeting.)

### PRESBYTERY BUDGET & SALARIES

**\$20,000 and under Budget Range:** 3 compensated their clerks \$1,200-1,500.  
**\$22,000-\$60,000 Budget Range:** 5 did not provide a salary for their clerks. 2 did provide mid-range salaries, \$1,200-\$1,500.  
**\$65,000-\$151,000 Budget Range:** 12 Presbyteries  
**\$288,000 Budget Range:** 1 Presbytery  
 (Larger budgets may include church plants. The salaries in these top budgets were the top and a few mid-salary ranges.)

### SALARY & NUMBER OF CHURCHES

(8-65 Churches per presbytery)  
**30 Churches:** Salaries 4000+  
**13-30 Churches:** Salaries \$2,000-\$3,600  
**13 Churches or fewer:** Salaries \$1,500 and less  
**(1 Presbytery with 13 churches paid \$4,620)**

NOTE: This is an informal survey of clerk's salaries done occasionally by the Moderator of the Clerk's Email Group.

## EIN INFORMATION

The PCA Stated Clerk's Office receives many questions about federal tax employer identification numbers (EINs).

The 11<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in 1983 instructed the Administrative Committee to file the necessary information with the IRS to obtain group recognition of PCA churches and presbyteries.

Churches are exempt from federal income tax under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to churches are deductible under Section 170, and Section 508 specifically exempts churches and associations of churches from the requirement to apply for recognition of tax-exempt status. Nevertheless, there may be certain benefits from receiving official recognition of tax-exempt status from the IRS and obtaining a "501(c)(3) letter."

In dealing with the various agencies of civil government (local, state and federal), proof of tax-exempt status is often required. Even though churches are exempt from federal income tax by law, government agencies will sometimes require copies of organizational documents to prove exemption. Even the seemingly simple task of obtaining a bulk-mailing permit from the U.S. Postal Service can become a very complicated task when the church must answer all of their questions and produce numerous documents.

Participation in the PCA group listing with the IRS is optional. Either the session or the entire presbytery should decide whether or not it wants to be included. If the church or presbytery wishes to be included, all that is needed is written permission for the Administrative Committee to include it in the list with its name, mailing address, and federal Employer Identification Number. If a church or presbytery were to apply for recognition from the IRS on its own instead of participating in the group recognition, it would have to submit lengthy forms and numerous documents to the IRS.

The IRS requires that each church and presbytery included on the list have a federal Employer Identification Number (EIN). The EIN is similar to an individual's Social Security Number and is used by the federal government to identify businesses, associations and churches, even if they have no employees. An EIN is used by a church or presbytery when reporting compensation paid to a minister or an employee, and is required by a banking institution when an account is opened. An EIN is not a "tax-exemption number". It will be used to identify the church or presbytery to the IRS and occasionally to other government agencies. If a church or presbytery is located in a state that exempts churches from state sales tax (not all states have such exemptions), there is a separate procedure for churches to obtain a tax exemption number and/or certificate. Check with your state tax department for further information.

The IRS has issued a "group exemption number" for the PCA churches and presbyteries included in the group exemption list, but that number is not used to obtain exemption from sales or other taxes. The number is only used on a few IRS forms, such as Form 990-T (if filing an annual tax return for unrelated business income) and Form 8274 (for electing exemption from FICA taxes on non-ordained employees).

All churches and presbyteries participating in the group IRS listing continue to use their own EIN whenever a federal identification number is requested (the number is sometimes called a "Taxpayer Identification Number" [TIN]). The PCA's Employer Identification Number is



never to be used by a church or presbytery (imagine what would happen if all your relatives used your Social Security number on their tax returns!).

Three additional matters should be noted:

- (1) If your church or presbytery does not currently have an EIN, and you decide to participate in the group listing, you should file Form SS-4 with the IRS office for your region (not with the AC office). **This EIN Form SS-4 and the SS-4 Instructions can now be found on the IRS web site at <http://www.irs.gov>. You can also receive your EIN number over the phone at 1-800-829-1040** (phone number subject to change without notice). After you obtain an EIN from the IRS, include it on the enclosed authorization form and send this form to our office.
- (2) Even though you may not currently have any employees, the IRS computer may start sending you Form 941, "Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return". If you do not have employees subject to FICA taxes or the withholding of income taxes (ordained staff are not subject to either FICA or withholding), you should return the form to the IRS with a letter explaining that you do not have any employees subject to FICA or withholding. Mention that you obtained your EIN as part of the procedure for obtaining IRS recognition of tax-exempt status, and that you will begin filing Form 941 when, and if, you employ any staff subject to FICA and withholding taxes. It may take a couple of such letters, but eventually someone will get the message. Do not ignore the forms or any other communications sent by the IRS. It is better to write to the IRS than to try to resolve things over the phone. If, after several attempts, you have been unsuccessful, the local office of your Congressman may be able to get the matter straightened out with the IRS.
- (3) After completing the enclosed form authorizing the Administrative Committee (by email, mail or fax) to include your church or presbytery in the group listing with the IRS, send the form to our office. Do not send the letter until you have an EIN. Our office will send (email) you a copy of the IRS group exemption letter (the "501(c)(3) letter") along with a cover letter certifying that you are a part of the group IRS listing. Please make photocopies of these documents whenever you are asked to provide proof of your federal tax-exempt status and keep the original documents in your file.

In summary, the steps to participate in the PCA group listing with the IRS are:

- (1) The Session (or presbytery) should approve being listed.
- (2) The church (or presbytery) should obtain a federal Employer Identification Number (if it doesn't already have one) and include it in the enclosed authorization letter which should be sent (email, mail or fax) to the AC office when completed.

An annual updated list is filed with the IRS each September, notifying them of additions, address changes and deletions of churches and presbyteries included in the PCA listing. Unless the Administrative Committee is notified in writing, each church and presbytery that has authorized our office to include it in the listing will continue to be listed. A church or presbytery may be deleted from the list, but our office must be notified in writing, and the deletion can only be done at the time of the annual update in September.

**AUTHORIZATION FORM**

The \_\_\_\_\_ (Presbytery, MNA, or Session) hereby authorizes the Presbyterian Church in America to include the church, mission, or presbytery named below in a group listing with the Internal Revenue Service for the purpose of recognition of federal tax-exempt status under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The following information is provided for the IRS group listing:

1.Name of Church, Mission, or Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

2.Please indicate if your Church is currently a Church Plant, Mission Church, or a Particularized Church: \_\_\_\_\_

3.Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

4.Meeting Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Federal Employer Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_

We will notify you of any change in our address or name change, so that you can keep the information on the IRS listing current. We understand that if we ever decide to have our name deleted from the IRS listing, we must notify you of our decision in writing.

We have/have not (strike the incorrect response) previously applied for recognition of federal tax exemption under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. If we previously applied for and received recognition of exempt status, our recognition letter was dated \_\_\_\_\_ and the issuing IRS office was located in \_\_\_\_\_.

Name—Please Print \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
(i.e. Pastor, Church Planter, Clerk of Session, Clerk of Presbytery, Church Treasurer)

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**RETURN TO: [stats@pcanet.org](mailto:stats@pcanet.org) or fax – 678-825-1001**

JAMES E. OSTENSON  
ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW  
1852 CENTURY PLACE, SUITE 130  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30345

(404) 329-0033

## **INCORPORATION OF PCA CHURCHES**

- Outline of the topic:
- I. Incorporation in General
  - II. Incorporation Procedure
    - A. Decision to Incorporate
    - B. Articles of Incorporation
    - C. Organizational Meeting
    - D. Bylaws
  - III. Operation of the Corporation
    - A. Board of Trustees
    - B. Officers of the Corporation
    - C. Corporate Minutes
    - D. Annual Corporate Registration
  - IV. Effects of Incorporation
    - A. Existing Churches
    - B. Mission Churches
    - C. Presbyteries

### **I. INCORPORATION IN GENERAL**

Incorporation of a local church is an optional procedure. The church's exemption from federal income tax is the same whether the church is an "unincorporated association" or a legally incorporated entity. The formation of a corporation by a church may be viewed as the obtaining of a tool to serve the church in its civil affairs and to protect its assets.

Formation of a corporation is controlled by the laws of the state in which the church is located. Most states provide for the formation of corporations by churches, although a few have unique laws applying to churches or even barring churches from having corporate status. There are both advantages and disadvantages from forming a corporation, which are discussed in the report of the Church-State Committee which was received as information by the 15th General Assembly [M15GA, 15-91, III, C, 32 & 33, p. 191 and Appendix Q, p. 443].

### **II. INCORPORATION PROCEDURE**

#### **A. Decision**

The decision to form a corporation should be considered initially by the Session. Although not required by *The Book of Church Order*, the Session might then make a recommendation to the congregation for its vote on the matter. In a mission church, the decision might be made by the advisory group or steering committee.

#### B. Articles of Incorporation

The church should obtain competent legal counsel, since a "do it yourself" approach to incorporation might result in errors that could cause serious problems in the future. Exhibit A provides an example of Articles of Incorporation for a PCA congregation. A local attorney can modify the sample document to meet state requirements and local custom.

#### C. Organizational Meeting

Once the corporation has been formed by filing the Articles of Incorporation with the appropriate state authority and receiving a Certificate of Incorporation (name may vary by state), the corporation should hold an organizational meeting. Since Section 25-7 of *The Book of Church Order* states that "[a ]11 the communing members on the roll of that church shall be members of the corporation", the organizational meeting should be held at a properly called congregational meeting. Exhibit B is an example of the Minutes for an organizational meeting. The matters included in the meeting may need to be tailored, to the legal requirements of the state in which the church is located.

In a mission church the organizational meeting would consist of the trustees instead of members. The trustees might be the organizing pastor and some of his advisory group or steering committee. Exhibit D provides an example of minutes of an organizational meeting for the trustees by common consent in lieu of an actual meeting. If state law does not permit such a shortcut to holding an organizational meeting, or should it be necessary to hold a meeting to discuss other corporate matters, the sample minutes can be easily adapted to an actual meeting.

#### D. Bylaws

One of the most important matters at the organizational meeting is the adoption of the corporate Bylaws. Exhibit C provides sample Bylaws which seek to harmonize legal requirements with Scriptural mandates and the provisions of *The Book of Church Order*. Although the Bylaws can be amended and expanded as needed, caution should be taken not to make them too lengthy or detailed. The Bylaws should apply only to the legal necessities of the corporation. Ecclesiastical matters and other policy decisions are better kept in the Session's policy manual.

### III. OPERATION OF THE CORPORATION

Once the organizational meeting has been held, the Bylaws adopted, and other matters of

"corporate housekeeping" handled, the corporation will essentially stay in the background as a tool to be used when needed.

#### A. Board of Trustees

As suggested by the sample Bylaws, the active members of the Session can serve as the Board of Trustees (or Board of Directors) of the church. When it becomes necessary to handle a corporate matter (such as real estate), the Session can adjourn its meeting and then call to order a meeting of the Board of Trustees, with the same men simply "changing hats." Where compatible with state law, it is recommended that the active Session members serve as the Board of Trustees to eliminate the potential misunderstandings about legal authority that can develop when there are two separate groups. To meet the requirement of *The Book of Church Order* Section 25-7, the congregation should be informed that in electing a man to serve as a Ruling Elder, they are also electing him to serve on the Board of Trustees.

Most corporate matters will involve only such things as authorizing the opening of bank accounts, designating the individuals who may sign checks, and dealing with real estate matters. As stated in Section 25-7 of *The Book of Church Order*, "[the powers and duties of such [corporate] officers must not infringe upon the powers and duties of the Session or of the Board of Deacons."

#### B. Officers of the Corporation

Section 25-7 of *The Book of Church Order* does not distinguish between the corporate Board of Trustees and corporate officers (who are often employees of the corporation in the business world). The sample Bylaws provide for a Board of Trustees who would "be elected from among the members of the corporation in a regularly constituted congregational meeting" at the same time those men were being elected to serve on the Session. However, there is a need for individuals to serve as corporate officers, with authority delegated to them by the Board of Trustees to carry out the day-to-day business operations of the corporation. The sample Bylaws suggest that the following individuals serve as corporate officers: (1) President - the senior pastor, (2) Vice President(s) - the associate pastor and/or assistant pastor(s), (3) Secretary - the Clerk of Session, and (4) Treasurer - an individual elected by the Board of Trustees. This arrangement can be altered to fit the church's situation, but it allows having corporate officers (except for the treasurer) serve ex officio, keeping the corporation in the background as a tool that is used only when needed.<sup>1</sup> The sample Bylaws give specific responsibilities to the

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<sup>1</sup> (a.) This arrangement interprets BCO Section 25-7 to mean that "the officers of the corporation, whether they be given the title 'trustee' or some other title" refers to the group given legal authority over the corporation, i.e., the Board of Trustees. The corporate officers, by comparison, only have the delegated authority given to them by the Board of Trustees. This permits the pastoral staff to serve as President and Vice President, even though they are not "members of the corporation" and also permits the Board of Directors to elect the Treasurer.

corporate officers that are in keeping with PCA polity and custom. The sample minutes of the organizational meeting of the corporation delegate authority to the corporate officers, the Session and the Board of Deacons in keeping with the provisions of *The Book of Church Order* that specify the appropriate duties and authorities of each group.

### C. Corporate Minutes

Minutes of the meetings of the Board of Trustees and the congregation (when corporate matters are brought before the congregation) should be kept in a corporate minute book. Such a book is often provided along with a corporate seal by the attorney handling the incorporation. .

### D. Annual Corporate Registration

Generally, all states providing for the formation of a corporation by a church require the filing of an annual registration form. In most states, the form only asks for the names and addresses of the current Trustees and corporate officers. There is usually a nominal filing fee required with the filing of the annual form. Failure to file the annual registration form will usually result in the dissolution of the corporation.

## IV. EFFECTS OF INCORPORATION

### A. Existing Churches

For existing churches, the formation of a civil corporation will necessitate changing the name of the church on bank accounts, deeds, insurance policies and other business-related matters. One of the reasons for changing the account names is to clearly state the church's corporate status. Should anyone ever win a lawsuit against the church, the claimant will generally be limited to the church's insurance coverage and corporate assets. The corporation provides a "shield" against a claimant's right to assets of the church's officers and members.

### B. Mission Churches

Section 5-7 of *The Book of Church Order* states: "It is the intention of the Presbyterian Church in America that mission churches enjoy the same status as particular churches in relation to civil government." Although the formation of a corporation might be premature for some mission churches, there are circumstances (such as the opportunity to purchase property) that might make incorporation desirable for a mission church. The decision to form a corporation should be made by the organizing pastor and his advisory group or steering committee only after obtaining counsel from the Presbytery or sponsoring church. The sample Bylaws included in this chapter would have to be

1. (b.) If a church disagrees with this interpretation, the Bylaws would be modified to provide for the election of corporate officers by the congregation from among the membership.

modified to reflect the mission church's current situation, but they can be amended when the mission church is organized as a particular church.

### C. Presbyteries

The *Book of Church Order* does not address the issue of a Presbytery forming a corporation. A number of presbyteries have formed corporations in recent years. With the growing number of lawsuits against churches and related organizations, the limitation of liability is a matter that should be considered by presbyteries. Litigation arising out of a church disciplinary matter or an injury at a presbytery-sponsored event could subject the presbytery and its member congregations to ~significant liability. If a presbytery had no liability insurance or a limited amount of insurance, a successful claimant could proceed to attach the presbytery's assets (which are usually very limited). If the damage award were large enough, and the presbytery had not formed a corporation, the claimant could proceed to attach the property of the Teaching Elders and churches that belong to the Presbytery. Having the status of a corporation would generally limit a claimant to the Presbytery's assets.

#### Summary of the topic:

Incorporation of a local church is an optional procedure that may benefit the church. Careful study and planning should precede the actual process of incorporation, using competent spiritual and legal counsel. The corporation should be structured in such a way that it is a tool serving the church, not a cumbersome nuisance. Once a corporation has been formed, the church should see that annual reports are filed and that other corporate formalities are observed to preserve the benefits the corporation can provide to the church.

INCORPORATION  
Exhibit A-I

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF  
  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC.  
A NONPROFIT CORPORATION

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of the corporation is FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC., and the corporation may adopt such trade names as it desires.

ARTICLE II. AUTHORITY

The corporation is organized pursuant to the provisions of the [name the state] Nonprofit Corporation Code. The form of church government is provided for by *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America. The governing body is therein provided, i.e., the Session. The Board of Trustees provided by these Articles of Incorporation shall perform all corporate powers necessary and as required by the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_. Unless otherwise required by the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_ (provided they are not in conflict with the Holy Scripture or doctrine), any conflict between these Articles of Incorporation and *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America shall be resolved in favor of *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America. The First Presbyterian Church, as a body of believers recognizes only the sovereignty of God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all things. The Church shall be governed according to the tenets of the Faith contained in the Holy Scriptures, being the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible, and according to the doctrines of the Church contained in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America. The Church recognizes God's ordination of the civil authority and the legitimate laws in support thereof. The Church shall uphold the laws of the civil authority provided said laws are not in conflict with the Holy Scriptures or the doctrine of the Church contained in the Constitution as shall be determined by the Church.

ARTICLE III. PURPOSES

The corporation is organized exclusively for religious, educational and charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law), and such purposes shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

[The church should develop its own statement of purpose, which may be as brief or as long as desired. The following purpose #1 is given as an example.]

1. To be a growing Christian fellowship glorifying God in worship, nurturing people in Biblical faith, and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout our community and into the world; and
2. To do everything necessary, suitable or proper for the accomplishment, attainment or furtherance of (and to do every other act or thing incidental to, pertinent to, growing out of or



INCORPORATION  
Exhibit A – 2

connected with) the purposes, objects or powers set forth in these Articles of Incorporation, whether alone or in association with others; to possess all the rights, powers and privileges now or hereafter conferred by law upon a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_, and, in general, to carry on any activities and to do any of the things herein set forth to the same extent as a natural person or partnership might or could do; provided that nothing herein set forth shall be construed as authorizing the corporation to possess any purpose, object or power to do any act or thing forbidden by law to a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of ..\_\_\_\_\_.

#### ARTICLE IV. DURATION

The corporation shall have perpetual duration.

#### ARTICLE V. RESTRICTIONS

Section 1. No Private Inurement. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its trustees, officers, or other private persons; except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article III hereof The corporation shall not have capital stock or shareholders.

Section 2. No Substantial Lobbying. No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation.

Section 3. No Political Campaigning. The corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

#### ARTICLE VI. TRUSTEES

Section 1. Number. Directors for the corporation shall be known as "Trustees". The Board of Trustees shall consist of not fewer than three (3) members, and of not more than a maximum number determined by the Bylaws of the corporation as amended from time to time

Section 2. Powers. The Board of Trustees shall manage the civil activities and affairs of the corporation, and shall have all the rights and powers of a board of directors under the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_ and of the United States, as well as such other rights and authority as are herein granted. Such rights and powers shall include, but not be limited to, the buying, selling and mortgaging of property for the church, the acquiring and conveying of title to such property, the holding and defending of title to the same, the managing of any permanent special funds entrusted to them for the furtherance of the purposes of the church, provided that such duties do not infringe upon the powers and duties of the Session or of the Board of Deacons. In buying, selling, and mortgaging real property the Trustees shall act solely under the authority of a corporation, granted in a duly constituted meeting of the corporation. The Board of Trustees shall have the power to adopt and amend the Bylaws by a majority vote, in any way not inconsistent with the Holy Scriptures, *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America, these Articles of Incorporation, or the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_

## INCORPORATION

Exhibit A - 3

and the laws of the United States (except where in conflict with the Holy Scriptures or doctrine).

Section 3. Election, Qualifications, and Term. The method of election, the qualifications, and the term of each member of the Board of Trustees shall be as established in the Bylaws.

Section 4. Officers. The Board of Trustees may elect such officers as the Bylaws may specify, who shall have such titles and exercise such duties as the Bylaws may provide.

Section 5. Initial Trustees. The initial Board of Trustees shall consist of five (5) members. The names and addresses of the persons who are to serve as Trustees until the first annual election of Trustees, or for such other periods as may be specified in the Bylaws are:

Samuel Jones  
111 Pleasant Road  
Anytown, State 00000

Fred Holly  
244 Pine Court  
Anytown, State 00000

Joe Miller  
3155 Peachtree Street  
Anytown, State 00000

Harry Thornton  
148 Briarwood Road  
Anytown, State 00000

James Black  
4896 Westside Drive  
Anytown, State 00000

## ARTICLE VII. MEMBERSHIP

The corporation shall have one class of members. Members shall be those persons who have qualified and been admitted into the membership of the church according to the requirements and provisions of The Book of Church order of the Presbyterian Church in America and the Session of the First Presbyterian Church. Members shall be entitled to one vote each. The only votes that members shall make are for election of Trustees and for such items as permitted or required by *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America.

INCORPORATION  
Exhibit A – 4

ARTICLE VIII. POWERS

Section 1. General. The corporation shall have all the rights and powers customary and proper for tax-exempt, nonprofit corporations, including the powers specifically enumerated in Section XX-X-XX of the [name of state] Code.

Section 2. Restrictions. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these Articles of Incorporation. The corporation shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or by a corporation to which contributions are deductible under Sections 170(b)(1)(A) and 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States internal revenue law).

ARTICLE IX. DISSOLUTION

Section 1. Dissolution. Dissolution must first be approved by two-thirds vote of the Session of First Presbyterian Church at a special meeting called for that purpose with appropriate notice given in writing stating the purpose of the meeting. Upon such approval by the Session, the membership of First Presbyterian Church must then approve such dissolution by majority vote at a specially called meeting pursuant to proper notice. The Board of Trustees may cease corporate activities and dissolve and liquidate the corporation by two-thirds vote only after the required approval by the Session and the membership of First Presbyterian Church.

Section 2. Liquidation. Upon dissolution of the corporation, the Board of Trustees shall payor make provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the corporation, and shall thereafter dispose of all of the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purposes stated in Article III hereof in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, or religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law), as the Board of Trustees shall determine.

Section 3. Contingent Provision. If any such assets are not so disposed of, the appropriate court of the county in which the principal [name of state] office (or if none, the [name of state] registered office) of the corporation is then located shall dispose of such assets exclusively for the purposes stated in Article III herein, and exclusively to such organization or organizations which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes and at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under such Section 501(c)(3), as said court shall determine.

ARTICLE X. INITIAL OFFICE AND AGENT

Section 1. Office. The initial registered office of the corporation shall be \_\_\_\_\_, Anytown, \_\_\_\_\_ County, \_\_\_\_\_ 00000.

INCORPORATION  
Exhibit A – 5

Section 2. Agent. The initial registered agent of the corporation at such address shall be

\_\_\_\_\_.

ARTICLE XI. INCORPORATOR

The name and address of the incorporator, who is a citizen of the United States, is

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Anytown, \_\_\_\_\_00000.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned attorney for, and representative of, the Incorporator has executed these Articles of Incorporation, pursuant to [name of state] Code Section XX-X-XX.

\_\_\_\_\_  
John C. Attorney  
Attorney for and Representative of  
The Incorporators

INCORPORATION  
Exhibit B-1

MINUTES OF ACTION OF  
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC.

We the members of FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC., do hereby adopt the following resolutions at a meeting of the said Corporation, duly called and held pursuant to applicable provisions of the [name of state] Nonprofit Corporation Code, and direct that the record of such actions shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Corporation.

A. Charter.

RESOLVED, that the Articles of Incorporation of this Corporation granted by the Secretary of State of [name of state] on [date of incorporation] be, and hereby are, accepted.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Corporation is hereby directed to place a copy of said Articles, together with the Certificate of the Secretary of State thereon in the Corporation minute book.

B. Bylaws.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the proposed Bylaws accompanying these Minutes be, and the same are hereby, adopted as the Bylaws for this Corporation. The Secretary of the Corporation is hereby directed to incorporate said Bylaws in the minute book of the Corporation directly preceding these minutes and to attest the same under his hand and seal as the Bylaws so adopted.

C. Seal.

RESOLVED, that the seal impressed on the margin of this page is hereby accepted as the seal of the Corporation.

D. Election of Trustees.

RESOLVED, that the following persons are hereby recognized as Trustees of the Corporation, having been duly elected by the members of the Corporation: [list all active Ruling Elders or others as elected by the congregation].

E. Election of Officers.

RESOLVED, that the following persons are hereby elected to the offices shown, with each officer to serve until his respective successor is duly elected and qualified:

- (1) President/Senior Pastor. . . . . \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) Secretary/Clerk of Session. . . . . \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) Treasurer . . . . . \_\_\_\_\_

F. Bank Account.

INCORPORATION

## Exhibit B-2

RESOLVED, that the bank resolution(s) in the form attached to this Consent of Trustees dealing with the designation of the bank or banks named herein as depository or depositories for the Corporation be and hereby are adopted as resolutions of the Corporation;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the proper officers of the Corporation be and hereby are authorized and directed to open such additional accounts with said bank or any other bank as may be selected. as depositories for the Corporation in the discretion of any of the Officers of the Corporation, and to deposit therein funds of the Corporation, drafts, checks and notes of the Corporation payable on said accounts to be made in the corporate name;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that such officers be and hereby are authorized to execute and deliver corporate resolutions on such forms as may be presented or required by said banks, said forms to be completed with such information as the executing officers may deem to be in the best interest of the Corporation;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that all such resolutions which may be required by banks hereafter selected by the Corporation dealing with the designation of such banks as depositories be and hereby are adopted as resolutions of the Corporation; and the Secretary or Assistant Secretary of the Corporation may hereafter attest to and execute such bank resolutions and/or forms without additional action of the Corporation.

G. Fiscal Year.

RESOLVED, that the fiscal year of the Corporation is hereby determined to commence on January 1 of each year and end on December 31 of the same year, until otherwise determined by the Board of Trustees.

H. Powers and Duties of Church Officers.

RESOLVED, that in accordance with Chapter 25 of *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America, along with Article VI of the Articles of Incorporation of this Corporation and the Introduction of the Bylaws of this Corporation, the Trustees and Officers of the Corporation shall refrain from exercising the powers and duties expressly assigned to the Session and Diaconate of the church by *The Book of Church Order* and do hereby acquiesce to the rights and authority of those bodies as detailed in *The Book of Church Order*.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of this Corporation intend for the routine conduct of the Corporation's business to be carried out by the Session and Diaconate of the church and do hereby delegate such matters to those bodies.

I. Organizational Expenses.

RESOLVED, that the officers of the Corporation be and hereby are authorized to pay all fees and expenses incident to and necessary for the organization of the Corporation and to complete all forms as may be presented or required by the Internal Revenue Service of the United States, said forms to be completed with such information as the Internal Revenue Service may deem to be required of the Corporation.

INCORPORATION

Exhibit B-3

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the hand and seal of the Secretary of the Corporation is set forth below, effective as of the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_"

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

(CORPORATE SEAL)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

INCORPORATION  
Exhibit C - 1

BYLAWS  
OF  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC.

Introduction.

The operation of First Presbyterian Church shall in all instances be according to the Holy Scriptures and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, which consists of the doctrinal standards set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms and *The Book of Church Order*, as adopted by the Presbyterian Church in America. These aforementioned documents include the doctrinal and procedural positions of local churches that are members of the presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America. First Presbyterian Church is a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America.

First Presbyterian Church is to be governed by the Session. This governing body is responsible for all of the operations of the Church, including receipt and disposition of funds. Therefore, the Treasurer of the Corporation is subject to the Session of the Church. Authority may be delegated to such persons as permitted by *The Book of Church Order*, including delegation of certain authority to the Treasurer of the Board of Deacons of the Church, should the Board of Deacons appoint a Treasurer other than the Treasurer of the Corporation.

These Bylaws are for the purpose of governing the Board of Trustees and the Officers of the nonprofit Corporation, FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC. They are to provide procedures wherein actions by these officers are necessary. These Bylaws shall not govern the operation of the Session or the Board of Deacons.

The Board of Trustees and corporate Officers are responsible for the lawful corporate affairs of the Corporation. They are subject to *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America, the lawful directions of the Session of First Presbyterian Church, the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_, the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws.

The purposes of First Presbyterian Church are those stated in the Articles of Incorporation. These Bylaws are to conform in all aspects to those purposes. Further, at any time that there is a conflict between these Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation, the Articles of Incorporation shall govern. At any time there is a conflict between these Bylaws and *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America, except as may be required by the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_ or the United States of America (provided such laws are not in conflict with the Holy Scripture or doctrine), *The Book of Church Order* shall govern.



INCORPORATION  
Exhibit C – 2

## ARTICLE I. OFFICES

Section 1.01. Registered Office and Agent. The address of the registered office of the Corporation is 123 Main Street, Anytown, \_\_\_\_\_ 00000, and the name of the registered agent at this address is \_\_\_\_\_.

Section 1.02. Other Offices. The Corporation may have officers at such place or places within or without the State of \_\_\_\_\_ as the Board of Trustees may from time to time appoint or as the business of the Corporation may require or make desirable.

## ARTICLE II. TRUSTEES

Section 2.01. Powers. The civil activities and affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by its Board of Trustees. In addition to the powers and authority expressly conferred on it by the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws, the Board of Trustees may exercise all such powers of the corporation and do all such lawful acts and things as are not prohibited by law (provided such laws are not in conflict with the Holy Scriptures or doctrine), by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, by the Articles of Incorporation, or by these Bylaws. Such powers and authority shall include, but not be limited to, the buying, selling and mortgaging of property for the church, the acquiring and conveying of title to such property, the holding and defending of title to the same, and the managing of any permanent special funds entrusted to them for the furtherance of the purposes of the church, provided that such duties do not infringe upon the powers and duties of the Session or of the Board of Deacons. In buying, selling, and mortgaging real property, the Trustees shall act solely under the authority of the Corporation, granted in a duly constituted meeting of the members of the Corporation.

Section 2.02. Number. The Board of Trustees shall consist of not more than fifteen (15) nor less than three (3) persons, the exact number of which shall be fixed by a resolution of the Trustees from time to time.

Section 2.03. Qualifications. Election. and Term. Trustees shall be of the age of eighteen (18) years or over, but need not be residents of the State of \_\_\_\_\_. The Board of Trustees shall consist of all current, active Ruling Elders serving on the Session of the church. Each Ruling Elder/Trustee shall be elected according to the qualifications and procedure detailed in *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America. Each Trustee shall serve on the Board of Trustees as long as he is an active member of the Session of the church.

2.04. No Compensation. The Trustees shall serve without compensation, except that the Board by resolution may provide for reasonable expenses for attendance at meetings of the Board to be reimbursed.

Section 2.05. Regular Meetings. Meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held at such place, either within or outside the State of \_\_\_\_\_, as may from time to time be fixed by resolution of the Board of Trustees, or as may be specified in the notice of meeting. Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held at such time as may from time to time be fixed by resolution of the Board of Trustees.

Section 2.06. Special Meetings. Special meetings may be held if called pursuant to Section 2.07 herein with at least two days' notice by telephone or personal delivery, or five days' notice by first class mail, of the time and place of the meeting to each Trustee.

## INCORPORATION

## Exhibit C – 3

Section 2.07. Calling Meetings. Meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called by the President of the Corporation when he may judge it requisite or when requested to do so by any two of the Trustees.

Section 2.08. Waiver of Notice. Notice of a meeting of the Board of Trustees need not be given in any event to any Trustee who signs a waiver of notice either before or after the meeting. Attendance of a Trustee at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting and waiver of any and all objections to the place of the meeting, the time of the meeting, or the manner in which it has been called or convened, except if a Trustee states, at the beginning of the meeting, any such objection or objections to the transaction of business.

Section 2.09. Contents of Notice. The business to be transacted at, and the purpose of, any regular or special meeting of the Board of Trustees need not be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such meeting.

Section 2.10. Quorum. A majority of the number of Trustees stated in the Articles of Incorporation or the number last fixed by the Trustees, as the case may be, at a meeting duly assembled, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the act of a majority of such Trustees present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Trustees except as may be otherwise specifically provided by law, by the Articles of Incorporation, or by these Bylaws. If at any meeting of the Board of Trustees there shall be less than a quorum present, a majority of those present may adjourn the meeting, without further notice, from time to time until quorum shall have been obtained.

Section 2.11. Conduct of Meetings. The President of the Corporation, and in his absence the acting President, named by the Board of Trustees, shall preside at meetings of the Board of Trustees. The Secretary of the Corporation, or in the Secretary's absence any person appointed by the presiding Officer, shall act as Secretary for meetings of the Board of Trustees. Meetings shall be governed by *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America and most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, except where Robert's Rules of Order are inconsistent therewith.

Section 2.12. Telephone Participation. Trustees may participate in meetings of the Board of Trustees through use of conference telephone or similar communications equipment so long as all Trustees participating in the meeting can hear one another. Such participation shall constitute personal presence at the meeting, and consequently shall be counted toward the required quorum in any vote.

Section 2.13. Written Consent. Any action required or permitted to be taken at any meeting of the Board of Trustees or of any committee thereof may be taken without a meeting if a written consent, setting forth the action so taken, is signed by all members of the Board or of such committee, as the case may be. Such written consent shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Board or committee.

Section 2.14. Adjournment. A majority of the Trustees present, whether or not a quorum exists, may adjourn any meeting of the Board of Trustees to another time and place. Notice of any such adjourned meeting shall be given to the Trustees who were not present at the time of the adjournment and, unless the time and place of the adjourned meeting are announced at the time of the adjournment, to the other Trustees, with at least two days' notice by telephone or personal delivery, or five days' notice by first class mail, of the time and place of the meeting.

## INCORPORATION

## Exhibit C - 4

Section 2.15. Removal. The Board of Trustees may declare the position of a Trustee vacant, and may remove such Trustee for cause, on occurrence of any of the following events: the Trustee has been declared of unsound mind by a final order of court, the Trustee has been convicted of a felony, or the Trustee has been deposed from the office of Ruling Elder through church discipline.

Section 2.16. Resignation. Any Trustee may resign by giving written notice to the President or the Secretary of the Corporation. The resignation shall be effective on receipt, unless the notice specifies a later time for the effective date of such resignation, or if the Corporation would be left without the minimum number of duly elected Trustees in which event the resignation shall be effective upon the election of a successor. If the resignation is effective at a future time, a successor may be elected before that time to take office when the resignation becomes effective.

Section 2.17. Vacancies. A vacancy on the Board of Trustees shall exist on the death, resignation, or removal of any Trustee; whenever the number of Trustees authorized is increased; and on failure of the Congregation to elect the full number of Ruling Elders/Trustees authorized. Such vacancies can only be filled for the remainder of the term by the election of additional Ruling Elders/Trustees by the Congregation.

## ARTICLE III. COMMITTEES

Section 3.01. Committees. Committees may be established by the Board from time to time; shall consist of two or more Trustees, as provided by the Board; and shall be authorized to exercise the authority of the Board of Trustees to the extent provided in the resolution creating any such committee. Any such committee shall act by majority vote; and shall have a quorum of one-third of the member Trustees, but in any event not less than two Trustees.

## ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

Section 4.01. Election. The Board of Trustees shall elect a Treasurer. The President, Secretary and any Vice Presidents shall serve ex officio as provided below.

Section 4.02. Other Officers. The Board of Trustees at any time and from time to time may appoint such other Officers as it shall deem necessary, including one or more Assistant Treasurers, and one or more Assistant Secretaries, who shall hold their offices for such terms as shall be determined by the Board and shall exercise such powers and perform such duties as shall be determined from time to time by the Board of Trustees or the President.

Section 4.03. Multiple Offices. Any person may hold any two or more Offices, except that no person may hold both the Offices of President and Secretary.

Section 4.04. Compensation. The salaries of the Officers of the Corporation shall be fixed by the Session of the church.

Section 4.05. Term. Each Officer of the Corporation shall hold office until his successor is chosen or until his earlier resignation, death, or removal.

Section 4.06. President. The Senior Pastor of the church shall serve as the President of the Corporation. The President shall preside at all meetings of the members of the Board of Trustees and at all Congregational meetings; shall be an advisory member of all committees; shall sign such papers as may be required by his office or as may be directed by the Board of

## INCORPORATION

## Exhibit C – 5

Trustees; shall make such reports and recommendations to the Board of Trustees of the Corporation at any regular or special meetings, concerning the work and affairs of the Corporation, as in his judgment may be necessary for their information and guidance~ may require such reports from the Treasurer and Secretary, as in his judgment are necessary~ shall manage the affairs and direct the work and employees of the Corporation, subject to and in accordance with the directions of the Session~ shall be authorized to incur expenses in accordance with the approved budget, or as directed by the Session~ and shall perform such other duties as may be incidental to the office.

Section 4.07. Vice Presidents. The Associate and/or Assistant Pastors of the church may be named by the Board to serve as Vice Presidents of the Corporation. The Vice Presidents, in the order named by the Board of Trustees, shall perform the duties of the President in the event of the absence, resignation, refusal to act, or inability to act of the President. One Vice President may be designated by the Board as Executive Vice President.

Section 4.08. Secretary. The Clerk of the Session shall serve as the Secretary of the Corporation. The Secretary shall issue in writing all notices of meetings~ shall notify individuals of their election to the Session and the Board of Trustees~ shall keep complete records and minutes of meetings of the Board and of the Congregation~ shall furnish the Board of Trustees with a list of officers, members of the Board of Trustees, and members of committees whose terms are expiring~ shall mail such other notices as may be directed by the Board of Trustees~ shall be custodian of all records of the Corporation, except such records and papers as shall be kept by the Treasurer as herein provided~ shall sign such papers as may be required by his office or as directed by the Board of Trustees~ and shall perform such other duties as may be incidental to the office.

Section 4.09. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Congregation, but may or may not be a member of the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer shall receive all moneys of the Corporation and have custody thereof~ shall deposit the funds of the Corporation in one or more banks selected by the Board of Trustees~ shall disburse funds in accordance with the directions of and upon the signatures of persons designated by the Board~ shall keep a full account of all moneys received and paid out and shall make such reports thereof to the President and Board of Trustees as they may require~ shall receive and have custody of all deeds, securities, notes, contracts and other financial papers of the Corporation and shall place them for safekeeping in the safe deposit vaults of a bank designated by the Board and under such rules as to access as the Board shall determine~ shall keep full account of all deeds, securities, notes and financial papers of the Corporation and shall make such accountings and reports thereof to the President and Board of Trustees as they may require~ shall cause the books of account of the Corporation to be reviewed at least once annually by a public accountant approved by the Board of Trustees shall cause to be prepared and shall present annually at a meeting of the Trustees a comprehensive financial statement including the report of the accountant shall sign such papers as may be required by his/her office or as may be directed by the Board of Trustees~ and shall perform such other duties as may be incidental to the office. He/She shall not be required to give any bonds, unless the Board of Trustees provide otherwise and in the amounts as they shall determine, for the faithful performance of his/her duties. The said books of account shall be open at any time during regular business hours to inspections by any Trustee, the President, and the Secretary.

## INCORPORATION

## Exhibit C - 6

Section 4.10. Contracts. Unless authorized in a particular instance by the Board of Trustees by resolution, no Officer, employee, or agent shall have any authority to bind the corporation by any contract, to pledge its assets or credit, or to render it liable pecuniarily, for any amount in excess of \$500. If so authorized, or if less than \$500, any of the foregoing Officers singly may execute contracts or deliver instruments on behalf of the Corporation, pledge its assets or credit, or render it liable pecuniarily.

Section 4.11. Removal. The Board of Trustees may remove any Officer other than President or Vice President with or without cause whenever in its judgment the best interests of the Corporation will be served thereby. Removal of the President or a Vice President shall be handled according to *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America. Election or appointment of an Officer or other agent shall not of itself create contract rights.

Section 4.12. Resignation. Any Officer may resign at any time on written notice to the Board of Trustees, to take effect immediately unless a future effective date is specified, without prejudice to any rights of the Corporation under any contract to which the Officer is a party.

Section 4.13. Vacancies. A vacancy in any Office shall exist on the death, resignation, or removal of any Officer. In case of a vacancy, the Board of Trustees may elect a new Officer, except for the Offices of President and Vice President, which shall be filled by men selected according to the procedures detailed in *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America. In case of the absence of any Officer of the corporation, or for any other reason that the Board of Trustees may deem sufficient, the Board of Trustees may delegate, for the time being, any or all of the powers or duties of such Officer to any other Officer or to any Trustee.

## ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

Section 5.01. Qualifications. Members shall be those persons who have qualified and been admitted into the communing membership of the church according to the requirements and provisions of *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America and the Session of the church. Each member shall be entitled to one vote each. Section 5.02. Meetings. Meetings of the Congregation of the church, when called pursuant to the procedures required by *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America, shall be considered to be meetings of the Corporation when the purpose of calling such meetings is for the consideration of matters concerning civil law, such as the buying, selling or mortgaging of real estate. Such Congregational meetings shall be conducted according to the rules and procedures of *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America and the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, except where Robert's Rules of Order are inconsistent therewith.

## ARTICLE VI. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 6.01. Amendment. Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation may be made by resolution of the Board of Trustees at a meeting at which two-thirds of the entire membership of the Board are present and voting therefore. The Board of Trustees shall have the power to adopt and amend by a majority vote these Bylaws in any way not inconsistent with *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America, the Articles of Incorporation or the laws

INCORPORATION  
Exhibit C – 7

of the State of \_\_\_\_\_ or the United States (provided such laws are not in conflict with the Holy Scriptures or doctrine).

Section 6.02. Dissolution. The Board of Trustees may cease corporate activities and dissolve the corporation as provided in Article IX of the Articles of Incorporation of the corporation.

Section 6.03. Indemnification. The Corporation shall indemnify its Trustees and Officers to the extent permitted by Sections XX-X-XXX and XX-X-XXX [cite the relevant portions of the state code] [name of state] Code, and may indemnify its employees and agents to the same or a narrower extent. The Board of Trustees may maintain liability insurance coverage for any or all of the Corporation's Trustees, Officers, employees, or agents.

Section 6.04. Racial Nondiscrimination Policy. The corporation's programs, including but not limited to its educational programs, shall admit persons of any race to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students or other persons in such programs. The corporation shall not discriminate on the basis of race in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, if any, and other programs.

Section 6.05. Corporate Seal. The seal of the Corporation shall consist of an impression bearing the name of the Corporation around the perimeter and the words "Corporate Seal" and such other information, including the year of incorporation, in the center thereof as is desired. In lieu thereof, the corporation may use an impression or writing bearing the words "Corporate Seal" enclosed in parenthesis or scroll which shall also be deemed the seal of the Corporation. Section 6.06. Fiscal Year. The Fiscal year of the Corporation shall be such period as the Board of Trustees shall determine, and unless otherwise so determined, shall begin on the first day of January of each year and end on the last day of December of each year.

INCORPORATION  
Exhibit C – 8

CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY

I hereby certify that the foregoing Bylaws comprising 7 pages constitute the Bylaws of the Corporation, that said Bylaws were duly adopted at a meeting of the Board of Trustees held on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, and that I am the duly elected and acting Secretary of the Corporation,

Dated \_\_\_\_\_20\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

INCORPORATION  
Exhibit D – 1

MINUTES OF ACTION OF  
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC.

TAKEN BY

UNANIMOUS WRITTEN CONSENT IN LIEU OF ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

As permitted by the [name of state] Nonprofit Corporation Code, we, the undersigned, being all the Trustees of FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC., do hereby unanimously consent to and adopt the following resolutions, which action shall have the same force and effect as if taken by us by unanimous affirmative vote at a meeting of the Board of Trustees of said Corporation, duly called and held pursuant to applicable provisions of the Nonprofit Corporation Code, and direct that the written consent to such action shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Trustees of the Corporation.

A. Charter.

RESOLVED, that the Articles of Incorporation of this Corporation granted by the Secretary of State of [name of state] on [date of certificate of incorporation] be, and hereby are, accepted.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Corporation is hereby directed to place a copy of said Articles, together with the Certificate of the Secretary of State thereon in the Corporation minute book.

B. Bylaws.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the proposed Bylaws accompanying this Consent of Trustees be, and the same are hereby, adopted as the Bylaws for this Corporation. The Secretary of the Corporation is hereby directed to incorporate said Bylaws in the minute book of the Corporation directly preceding this written Consent of Trustees and to attest the same under his hand and seal as the Bylaws so adopted.

C. Seal.

RESOLVED, that the seal impressed on the margin of this page is hereby accepted as the seal of the Corporation.

D. Election of Trustees.

RESOLVED, that the following persons are hereby recognized as Trustees of the Corporation, having been elected by the members of the Corporation to serve as the current, active Ruling Elders of First Presbyterian Church: Samuel Jones, Fred Holly, and Joe Miller. [In a mission church situation, it would be appropriate to name the pastor and members of his advisory or steering committee as Trustees and rewording this section to read: RESOLVED, that the following persons are hereby elected as Trustees of the Corporation, subject only to their acceptance of such position: Samuel Jones, Fred Holly, and Joe Miller.]



## INCORPORATION

Exhibit D - 2

E. Election of Officers.

RESOLVED, that the following persons are hereby elected to the offices shown or recognized ex officio as an officer, where appropriate, with each officer to serve until his respective successor is duly elected and qualified:

- (1) President/Senior Pastor. . . . . [name of pastor]
- (2) Secretary/Clerk of Session. . . . . [name of clerk]
- (3) Treasurer ..... [name of treasurer]

F. Bank Account.

RESOLVED, that the bank resolution(s) in the form attached to this Consent of Trustees dealing with the designation of the bank or banks named herein as depository or depositories for the Corporation be and hereby are adopted as resolutions of the Board of Trustees;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the proper officers of the Corporation be and hereby are authorized and directed to open such additional accounts with said bank or any other bank as may be selected as depositories for the Corporation in the discretion of any of the Officers of the Corporation, and to deposit therein funds of the Corporation, drafts, checks and notes of the Corporation payable on said accounts to be made in the corporate name; FURTHER RESOLVED, that such officers be and hereby are authorized to execute and deliver corporate resolutions on such forms as may be presented or required by said banks, said forms to be completed with such information as the executing officers may deem to be in the best interest of the Corporation;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that all such resolutions which may be required by banks hereafter selected by the Corporation dealing with the designation of such banks as depositories be and hereby are adopted as resolutions of the Board of Trustees; and the Secretary or Assistant Secretary of the Corporation may hereafter attest to and execute such bank resolutions and/or forms without additional action of the Board of Trustees.

G. Fiscal Year.

RESOLVED, that the fiscal year of the Corporation is hereby determined to commence on January 1 of each year and end on December 31 of the same year, until otherwise determined by this Board of Trustees.

H. Powers and Duties of Church Officers.

RESOLVED, that in accordance with Chapter 25 of *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America, along with Article VI of the Articles of Incorporation of this Corporation and the Introduction to the Bylaws of this Corporation, the Trustees and Officers of this Corporation shall refrain from exercising the powers and duties expressly assigned to the Session and Diaconate of the church by *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America and do hereby acquiesce to the rights and authority of those bodies as detailed in *The Book of Church Order*.

INCORPORATION  
Exhibit D – 3

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Trustees and Officers of this Corporation intend for the routine conduct of the Corporation's business to be carried out by the Session and Diaconate of the church and do hereby delegate such matters to those bodies.

I. Organizational Expenses.

RESOLVED, that the officers of the Corporation be and hereby are authorized to pay all fees and expenses incident to and necessary for the organization of the Corporation and to complete all forms as may be presented or required by the Internal Revenue Service of the United States, said forms to be completed with such information as the Internal Revenue Service may deem to be required of the Corporation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the hand and seal of each member of the Board of Trustees is set forth below, effective as of the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Samuel Jones, Trustee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fred Holly, Trustee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joe Miller, Trustee

(CORPORATE SEAL)

## **PASTORS OPTING OUT OF SOCIAL SECURITY**

Opting out of Social Security is not something that should be automatic or taken lightly. Geneva Benefits has an excellent interview online regarding what a pastor should consider before opting out of social security, and it is reprinted below:

### **Q&A: Should pastors opt out of Social Security?**

Under U.S. tax code, ordained ministers can opt out of Social Security. Form 4361 declares that ministers who are theologically opposed to receiving benefits from the government can excuse themselves from Social Security.

While keeping 15.3 percent each paycheck instead of giving it to the government might seem like the way to go, opting out of social security is not a decision to make lightly. There are irrevocable repercussions. Once a pastor chooses to opt out, they are out for good in most cases.

The government recognizes the monumental cost of this choice. Generally, they give a minister two years to decide once they come ordained.

To illuminate the significance of this decision, we sat down with Rev. Ed Dunnington, Certified Financial Planner (CFP) and President of Geneva Benefits Group to learn more.

### **Ed, what is your background?**

Currently, I'm a CRPC and Financial Planning Advisor\* with Geneva. I joined Geneva in March 2015. Before this, I planted and pastored Christ the King Presbyterian Church in Roanoke, Virginia, for nine years. (\*Editor note: Ed Dunnington is now the President of Geneva Benefits Group.)

And before ministry in Virginia, I served as a campus minister for Reformed University Fellowship at the University of Washington for eight years.

### **So you've been on both sides of the table—pastoring and finance. Have you met pastors who have chosen to opt out of Social Security?**

Unfortunately, yes I have. I have even been working with pastors nearing retirement who regret their decision to opt out. Since once you opt out, you're out for good in most cases, many pastors nearing retirement are worrying that they did not save as much as they should have.

The allure to save 15.3 percent in annual taxes is strong, especially since ministry wages are generally modest. However, the repercussions years down the road are staggering. Though imperfect, Social Security offers competitive advantages during the retirement years. Social Security guarantees half your income and gives you access to medical coverage that otherwise might be more difficult to come by.

### **Why do people typically choose to opt out?**

I sometimes run across two reasons: 1) the pastor is afraid that Social Security will be insolvent by the time they hit retirement age; or 2) the pastor thinks he can invest his money better than the government can.

However, it is important to note that the only legal reason to opt out of Social Security is if a pastor believes that receiving benefits from the government is theologically wrong. A pastor can only opt out if he can truthfully state:

“I am consciously opposed to, or because of my religious principles I am opposed to, the acceptance of any public insurance that makes payments in the event of death, disability, old age, or retirement; or that makes payments towards the cost of, or provides services for, medical care” (Form 4361).

**What do you tell pastors when they state, “Social Security is going to dissolve by the time I hit retirement age”?**

Social Security began in 1935, and we will be speaking Mandarin before it goes away. Let’s be honest, there is one golden rule or purpose, as I observe it, of every elected official and that’s to remain in office. The most surefire way to get voted out is to remove Social Security. Look at what’s happening now: We’re unable to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, and it’s far less comprehensive and has far less history than Social Security.

It is important to note that many bills to stabilize Social Security have been introduced and failed. With that said, there is a bill making its way through the legislative branch will equalize Social Security to match mortality tables. This bill means that Social Security will mirror contemporary life expectancy. This will stabilize Social Security for upcoming generations.

**How about when pastors say, “I can invest my money better than the government can”?**

Again, if financial wisdom was the grounds which pastors were given as an option to opt out then maybe, but that is not the grounds given to ministers to exempt themselves from the law.

But for the sake of curiosity, let’s explore that statement. If you kept the 15.3 percent of income instead of paying the tax, then to outperform Social Security you must:

- Invest sufficiently to cover the hole left by Social Security payments for both you and the spousal benefit, which is 50 percent of the FRA for the working spouse (to have integrity with your signed statement opting out of Social Security, I believe you would be hard-pressed to receive any spousal benefit from your wife’s work history, nor should you allow your spouse to receive any Social Security benefits);
- Disability insurance to make up for what Social Security would provide;
- Life Insurance to provide a death benefit to make up for what Social Security would provide;
- Invest sufficiently to cover Part A Medicare benefit, which costs \$413 per month per person in 2017. Assuming that medical costs only rise with inflation, which has not happened in decades, that would cost \$19,823 in 35 years (assuming a pastor is 30 today and opts out. He has 35 years until age 65 when he would be eligible for Medicare).

**So their personal investments would have to perform well then, right?**

All investments in the market are subject to gains and losses. However, the market generally produces solid returns over the long haul (30+ years). With Social Security, you have the closest thing to guaranteed income to complement your market-based investments. By remaining in Social

Security and contributing to a retirement plan, you have both a fixed income source for retirement as well as enjoying potential market gains.

Do you really want to bet entirely on the stock market and your own personal investments to take care of you and your family for 20 years? I wouldn't.

**Geneva Benefits group guides PCA pastors and ministry workers through the complexities of financial planning and benefits so that they and their families can live generously in every season of life. Contact our office today to learn what it takes to prepare well for retirement.**

**If a pastor in your presbytery is opting out of social security, they will need the following information:**

1. For pastors wanting to opt out of Social Security, they need to obtain the EIN of the presbytery in which they were ordained. (They were ordained by the presbytery, not the denomination or local church.)
2. If a pastor was ordained by the RPCES, use his current presbytery's EIN.
3. Use SS Form 2031 to Revoke Exemption from SS. This form can now be found on the IRS web site at <http://www.irs.gov>.

## **DIRECTORS' AND OFFICERS' (D&O) INSURANCE**

The Stated Clerk's Office strongly advises presbyteries to purchase and maintain D&O Insurance.

We live in a litigious society. Our desire would be for the body to solve our conflicts within the structure of church government, or better still, within Christian conciliation means. However, in the event of a lawsuit, the denomination is covered by such coverage, but should a presbytery be named in the suit, the presbytery could be at risk. (Note: Please keep the Stated Clerk's Office informed of such events, or the potential for them.)

We would encourage presbyteries that are not insured to initiate the process for the purchase and annual renewal of such insurance. You can find out more about the policy we suggest by contacting our agent Rob Townley at 404.378.4397 or [rob@townleykenton.com](mailto:rob@townleykenton.com).

## GUIDE TO THE PASTOR SEARCH PROCESS

The PCA Stated Clerk's Office provides an information distribution service for the benefit of churches and pastors. We are not a full-service placement office, nor can we guarantee a call if our information service is used. We frequently are not kept informed on the status of search processes. If you know of a church or individual who desires to make use of this service, or if you have questions or need assistance, please visit our website, [www.pcaac.org](http://www.pcaac.org), or contact the Stated Clerk's Office at [pastorsearch@pcanet.org](mailto:pastorsearch@pcanet.org) or 678-825-1000. To give you an overview of the service:

- Churches with vacant pulpits may file a Church Profile Form (CPF) with the Stated Clerk's Office and receive information on candidates who match that profile.
- A Ministry Opportunities List is updated regularly on our website: [www.pcaac.org](http://www.pcaac.org). The Ministry Opportunities List catalogs pulpits and staff positions open in the PCA. Churches may opt whether or not to be included on this list, so it is not necessarily a comprehensive list.
- A packet of information is available to give pulpit committees guidelines and other helpful information for their task.
- Pastors, as well, may complete a Ministerial Data Form (MDF) to place on file with the Stated Clerk's Office. It may, at the candidate's request, be filed actively or inactive, and may be sent to any church or just to select churches. Forms are kept active for 18 months, and then made inactive unless the candidate gives further instructions.
- Pastors from other denominations occasionally request our service. We do keep MDFs on file for those pastors; however, they are given last priority when distributing information.
- The Church Profile Form, the Ministerial Data Form, and the Ministry Opportunities List are available by contacting [pastorsearch@pcanet.org](mailto:pastorsearch@pcanet.org).
- We also keep a list of experienced teaching elders who have indicated an interest in serving as an interim pastor. If this would be of interest to your church, please contact [pastorsearch@pcanet.org](mailto:pastorsearch@pcanet.org).
- As you move through the pastoral search process, if you run into difficult questions or just need good outside advice, we have men of experience and wise counsel to whom we can direct you.

## **PREPARING FOR LICENSURE AND ORDINATION EXAMS**

For a copy of the Syllabus/Study Guide written by Bryan Chapell and Jim Meek, contact:

PCA Bookstore  
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 102  
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30043-8143

Email: [bookstore@pcanet.org](mailto:bookstore@pcanet.org)  
Phone: 1-800-283-1357  
Web: [www.pcabookstore.com](http://www.pcabookstore.com)





## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

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TO: Clerk of Session

FROM: L. Roy Taylor

DATE: February 10, 2005

SUBJECT: Merger of Church A and Church B

BCO 13-9 f. gives Presbytery the authority to “unite churches.” There are no specific procedures for doing so delineated in the BCO, however.

The merger of churches is both an ecclesiastical transaction and a legal or civil transaction, since there are corporate, financial and property issues involved. I believe *it is imperative that both churches secure legal counsel to help them deal with legal and corporate matters.* Each church is an ecclesiastical entity recognized by the Presbytery and a civil entity recognized by the State as an unincorporated religious society or as an incorporated church. I hope both churches are incorporated.

The simplest process would be for the Church A members to join Church B. But, before doing so you would need to have congregational action to deal with the sale of the Church A building and the distribution of the proceeds of the sale, the distribution or sale of the real and personal property of the church, and the continuance, succession, or eventual termination of the church corporation.

As I understand it, however, you all are planning a merger rather than the Church A members joining Church B *en masse*.

In answer to your questions, whether or not you have to apply for a new charter with the Secretary of State's Office is a legal matter. You should contact an attorney for advice on that matter.

I do not know if you will need a new Federal Tax ID number or not. I assume you could use the Church B number and just inform the IRS of a change in church name. An attorney or the IRS could give a more definitive answer.

BCO 16-2 states, “The government of the Church is by officers gifted to represent Christ, and the right of God's people to recognize by election to office those so gifted is inalienable. Therefore no man can be placed over a church in any office without the election, or *at least the consent of that church*” [emphasis added]. BCO Preliminary Principle 6 states, “. . . the power to elect persons to the exercise of authority in any particular society resides in that society.” That principle applies to the pastors, associate

pastors, ruling elders and deacons. If the intention is that all the officers of both churches become officers in the united church there are two ways to accomplish that.

1. If the Church A members join Church B *en masse*, the Church A officers could be elected as officers at Church B following the usual process (BCO 24), or
2. If you were taking the merger route, both congregations would need to vote on a resolution (prior to the merger) to accept the ruling elders and deacons as officers of the united church.

If the churches are incorporated, again there are two possibilities on the matter of Trustees.

1. If the Church A members join Church B *en masse*, the Church A trustees could be elected as trustees at Church B following the usual process (BCO 25-7), or
2. If you were taking the merger route, both congregations would need to vote on a resolution (prior to the merger) to accept the trustees of both churches as trustees of the united church.

The matter of trustees is a legal matter that requires the advice of an attorney.

On the membership matter, again there are two possibilities.

1. If the Church A members join Church B *en masse*, then both the communicant and non-communicant members would become members of Church B. The communicant members would need to appear personally before the Church B session and request to be received by transfer. They would *not* join merely by sending a list of members from the Church A session to Church B session. (We had an instance last year in which a session received about one hundred members as a group by transfer, and the presbytery ruled that such a procedure was improper, on the ground that persons transferring membership must appear individually before the session). Church A members, who did not want to join Church B could transfer to other churches.
2. If you were taking the merger route, both congregations and both sessions would need to vote on a resolution (prior to the merger) to accept the members of both churches as members of the united church. Church A members, who did not want to become members of the united church, could transfer to other churches.

How to handle the proceeds of the sale of the Church A building would be a matter for the congregation to decide. I think it would be wise to have a resolution passed by the congregation that would either

1. Stipulate in detail how the proceeds are dispersed (for example, \$x as a retirement gift to the sexton, \$y to Mrs. B. I. Anderson as a retirement stipend, \$z to MTW for the support of specified missionaries and, if you are so inclined, the remainder to the newly merged church), or
2. Stipulate that the session be authorized by the congregation to disperse the proceeds as the session deems appropriate.

With regard to the other property of the church (furniture, furnishings, etc.) BCO 9-2 states regarding the deacons of a church,

They shall have the care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. *In matters of special importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without the approval of the Session and consent of the congregation* [emphasis added]. In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session.

I believe it would be wise to have the congregation approve a resolution to authorize the session to approve the diaconate's distribution or sale of the furniture, furnishings, equipment, real and personal property of the church. In that way some of items may be given away to members with sentimental attachment to certain items, some things could be sold, and others given away to appropriate recipients.

If someone has contributed tax-deductible funds to the church for a specified item (furniture for the ladies parlor or a \$10,000 piano for the sanctuary, for example) or contributed a tax-deductible specified item (such as a \$10,000 piano), those items are the property of the church, not the donor. If the church decided to return tax-deductible funds or items, the church should issue a 1099 Miscellaneous Income Form to the recipient, who would then have to declare that as income for income tax purposes. People should be aware that the IRS discourages the return of tax-deductible funds and items, and that such return may trigger an audit. This is another item on which legal counsel is advisable.

With regard to the role of the ministers of the two churches, I assume that one minister would become the pastor of the united church and one would become an assistant or associate pastor of the united church. I see four possible ways of handling it.

1. If the Church A members join Church B *en masse*, the pastor of Church A could resign (following the specified procedures in the BCO) and the session of Church B could call him as an assistant pastor.
2. If the Church A members join Church B *en masse*, the pastor of Church A could resign (following the specified procedures in the BCO) and the congregation of Church B could call him as an associate pastor.
3. If you were taking the merger route, both congregations would need to vote on a resolution (prior to the merger) to accept the ruling elders and deacons as officers of the united church and the session of the united church could call the pastor of Church A as an assistant pastor at the united church.
4. If you were taking the merger route, both congregations would need to vote on a resolution (prior to the merger) to accept the ruling elders and deacons as officers of the united church and both congregations could vote on a resolution accepting Pastor B as the pastor and Pastor A as the associate pastor of the united church.

If the merger does not go through, and the congregation votes to sell the Church A property, the session could make the decision on renting facilities for worship. In the event the purchase of another facility for worship presents itself, the congregation would vote on the purchase of new property.

If the sale of the Church A property is approved and the members transfer to Church B, or the two churches are merged, I think it would be wise to continue the Church A Corporation for a time to receive any bequests, or to specify that the Church B or the united church be the successor corporation. This is another matter on which you will need legal counsel. This item should also be included in your final congregational meeting in the form of a resolution to be enacted.

In summary, whether or not the merger goes through and you sell the Church A building, you would have a congregational meeting for the congregation to vote on appropriately prepared resolutions (after securing legal counsel) to

1. Authorize the Trustees to sell the building.
2. Specify how the proceeds of the sale are to be distributed and who is to make the distribution (trustees or session).
3. Authorize the session to approve the diaconate's distribution or sale of the furniture, furnishings, equipment, real and personal property of the church.
4. Specify a plan for the continuance, succession, or eventual termination of the corporation.
5. Petition presbytery to dissolve the church, if that is the intention of the congregation. If you were going to continue as a church in another location, then you would not have a resolution requesting dissolution.

If the intention is for the two churches to merge, Church A would still have a congregational meeting to vote as stated above but, additionally, both Church A and Church B congregations would need to vote on appropriately prepared resolutions (after securing legal counsel) to

1. Accept the ruling elders and deacons as officers of the united church.
2. Accept the ministers of both churches as ministers of the united church, specifying who would be the pastor and who would be the associate pastor.
3. Accept the trustees of both churches as trustees of the united church.
4. Stipulate a procedure for the corporation of the united church to become the corporation in succession to the corporations of the two churches.

I note from the last annual report from Church A (2001) that you had 588 members listed. I note from your fax, that there were forty-three members present and voting at a recent congregational meeting. Therefore, I suggest that the session update the accuracy of the church membership roll, following BCO 38-4, before having your final congregational meeting. I note also that Church A has more officers than Church B, but Church B has a larger attendance. Merging the sessions with the former Church A elders becoming the instant majority would probably be unacceptable to Church B.

I trust this advice is helpful. *I emphasize again that you should secure legal counsel in order to proceed appropriately in accordance with Mississippi law.*

Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, “The Rules of Assembly Operation,” “The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission,” and/or *Robert’s Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA or staff members of the Office of the Stated Clerk are for information only and are not authoritative rulings that may only be made by the courts of the Church. Responses to inquiries are based on information supplied by the inquirer, which may not necessarily be comprehensive. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not represent parties in ecclesiastical judicial cases. Parties to potential cases or cases in process are responsible for their own constitutional and procedural knowledge and understanding. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not give legal advice. When legal advice is needed, professional legal counsel should be secured from one familiar with applicable laws and regulations.

## GUIDE TO THE PCA STATED CLERK'S OFFICE

This information helps you know who to contact at the Stated Clerk's Office when you have a question or need help. You are also welcome to call the main number, 678-825-1000, or send an email to [ac@pcanet.org](mailto:ac@pcanet.org), and your communication will be forwarded to the appropriate person. However, if you want to make a direct contact, please use the directory below.

Regarding	Contact
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BCO Votes	Priscilla Lowrey- <a href="mailto:plowrey@pcanet.org">plowrey@pcanet.org</a>
ByFaith Magazine	Richard Doster- <a href="mailto:editor@byfaithonline.com">editor@byfaithonline.com</a>
Certification Cards	Margie Mallow – <a href="mailto:mmallow@pcanet.org">mmallow@pcanet.org</a>
Change Forms	Monica Johnston- <a href="mailto:records@pcanet.org">records@pcanet.org</a>
Clerks Handbook	Heidi Harrison - <a href="mailto:hharrison@pcanet.org">hharrison@pcanet.org</a>
Committee of Commissioners	Heidi Harrison - <a href="mailto:hharrison@pcanet.org">hharrison@pcanet.org</a>
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Presbytery Boundaries	Heidi Harrison - <a href="mailto:hharrison@pcanet.org">hharrison@pcanet.org</a>
Presbytery Meetings	Anna Eubanks – <a href="mailto:aeubanks@pcanet.org">aeubanks@pcanet.org</a>
Presbytery Minutes and Exception Responses	Margie Mallow – <a href="mailto:mmallow@pcanet.org">mmallow@pcanet.org</a>
Presbytery Rolls	Monica Johnston- <a href="mailto:records@pcanet.org">records@pcanet.org</a>
Review of Presbytery Records (RPR)	Margie Mallow – <a href="mailto:mmallow@pcanet.org">mmallow@pcanet.org</a>
Salary Studies	Erika Derr – <a href="mailto:ederr@pcanet.org">ederr@pcanet.org</a>
Standing Judicial Commission (SJC)	Margaret Baker – <a href="mailto:mbaker@pcanet.org">mbaker@pcanet.org</a>
Statistical Forms for Churches	Erika Derr – <a href="mailto:ederr@pcanet.org">ederr@pcanet.org</a>
Verification or Letter of Good Standing	Erika Derr – <a href="mailto:ederr@pcanet.org">ederr@pcanet.org</a>
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## COMMON QUESTIONS FROM STATED CLERKS

Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, "The Rules of Assembly Operation," "The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission," and/or *Roberts Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America are of an advisory nature and are not authoritative rulings that may only be rendered by the courts of the Church.

1. *What does a presbytery do when a church does not submit minutes for review, as the BCO requires?*

A presbytery may assign the case to a Shepherding or Minister's Oversight Committee. This committee can visit and discuss the importance of the minutes with the session of the delinquent church. If this step is taken without result, additional formal action should be initiated through the presbytery; such action could lead to severing connection with the church.

2. *For what period of time does an elder hold office?*

The office of elder is perpetual; that is, one holds the office for life unless removed from office through discipline or the elder demits. The BCO allows the church to determine the rotation or non-rotation of service.

Most of BCO 24 addresses the matter of service. If a man who has been elected an elder goes on "inactive" status he remains an elder, but is not active on the session. To return to active service he must be elected and installed again. While he is inactive he may be called on to serve on committees of the courts (24-9). The references to an official relationship with the session are to service and not to the office per se (24-6, 8).

3. *Are officers permitted to vote before they are installed?*

BCO 24-7 implies that installation is the official beginning of service for officers. Just as a teaching elder is not officially the pastor of a church until installed, so a ruling elder or deacon does not function officially until installation. If a session or diaconate desires to use the services of men elected to office but not yet installed, they may do so, but until they are installed, they cannot vote.

4. *Is the presbytery required to approve any amendments to a pastor's "terms of call?"*

The 11<sup>th</sup> GA (M11GA, p.101, item 55) adopted the following advice from the Judicial Business Committee: "BCO 20-1 indicates that a presbytery must approve the call of a pastor. The call establishes the relationship of the pastor to the calling body. The BCO is silent concerning amending the call; however, in as much as the initial relationship must be approved by presbytery, it would follow that if any changes are made in the original call, the presbytery would necessarily have to approve the changes in the call for the protection of both the pastor and the calling body."

The 21<sup>st</sup> GA adopted an overture to require that "any amendment to the terms of the call must be reported to and approved by the presbytery when amended." The action was sent down to the presbyteries for advice and consent (M21GA, II, 17, p.139) and the amendment failed to receive the two-thirds vote of consent from the presbyteries (M22GA, p. 55, item 3). However, many presbyteries have included in their Bylaws the requirement for reporting to the presbytery any changes to "terms of call."

5. *What is the proper use of the “extraordinary clause?”*

The 9<sup>th</sup> GA (M9GA 9-65, III, E, p.122) responded to this question: “The General Assembly recognizes that the use of the extraordinary clause is left to the discretion of an individual presbytery subject to review of the General Assembly and to the process provided for in the complaint. The General Assembly declares that the use of the extraordinary clause should be limited to extraordinary circumstances of the church or proven extraordinary gifts of the man. The Assembly would take notice, however, that there has been an increasing laxity in the application of the clause. The Assembly would, therefore, counsel that presbyteries exercise diligence and care in the use of this provision in order that they not prevent the ordination of a candidate for whom there are truly exceptional circumstances nor ordain a person who is inadequately prepared for the ministry.”

6. *Can a presbytery require a congregation to hold a congregational meeting (BCO 13-9)?*

If there is a functioning session the answer is no. However, the presbytery can request (but not mandate) that the congregation hold a congregational meeting. If there is no functioning session and a committee serves as a session, the answer is yes, according to BCO 13-9.

7. *In what circumstances can a presbytery dissolve a church or a church session?*

There have been two SJC cases on the matter of dissolving a session:

In Case 90-4, The Judgment read:

“2. The BCO does not give a presbytery the authority and power to suspend members of a session without the consent of the congregation and without due process.”

In Case 91-2, The Judgment read:

“1. The *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America does not give a presbytery constitutional authority and power to suspend, either temporarily or permanently, the session of a local church without the consent of the congregation and without due process... the presbytery did not have constitutional authority or power to suspend the session

2. Because the presbytery does not have the constitutional authority or power to replace, suspend or act as a session pro tem for a session of a church without the prior formal consent of the congregation of that church, the presbytery correctly determined that it did not have constitutional authority and power to constitute itself, or its commission, to act at any time as a session pro tem for the church.”

There is no provision made in the BCO for a presbytery directly or through a commission to dissolve a session without due process (BCO 24-6; 33-1). If a session is unable to function [for example, they do not have two elders] (BCO 12-1), then the presbytery may assume original jurisdiction. “In cases in which the session cannot exercise its authority, it [presbytery] shall have the power to assume original jurisdiction” (BCO 13-9). As to the dissolution of a church, according to BCO 13-9.f, 13-10, the presbytery, at the request of the members, can dissolve a church.

8. *Are ruling elders allowed to administer the sacraments?*

The General Assembly considered the issue of whether ruling elders could administer the sacraments early in the history of the PCA when we had a shortage of ministers, which we do not now have. The Assembly studied the issue from 1973-1977 and finally came down on the historic majority opinion that only ministers may administer the sacraments. “Recommendation 8: That the General Assembly affirm that in keeping with the confessional standards of the

church, only properly ordained teaching elders may administer the sacraments" (M7GA, p. 84 [WCF 27-4, WLC 176]). There were majority and minority reports.

9. *What role does Robert's Rules of Order play in our parliamentary authority?*

The General Assembly, presbyteries and sessions have the following hierarchy of parliamentary authorities: (1) the PCA Constitution (*Westminster Standards, BCO*), (2) Standing Rules (in the case of the Assembly, the "Rules of Assembly Operation"), and (3) *Robert's Rules of Order*. The Constitution is the primary authority, the Standing Rules are the secondary authority, and *RRO* is the tertiary authority. It is nowhere stated that *RRO* supersedes the Constitution.

10. *When does a church member have access to a session's minutes?*

References to church members' access to minutes are in *BCO* 10-4 and 12-7, and yet neither of those references settles the issue of whether a church member may have access to session minutes, other than to extract from the minutes "whenever properly required" (*BCO* 10-4). A session may adopt a standing rule that supersedes and is different from *RRO*, but not contrary to the *BCO*. If the standing rules of a session do not address the issue, then *Robert's Rules of Order*, Chapter XV, Section 47, page 444, Tenth Edition, should be consulted: "Any member [of a society] has a right to examine the minutes of the society at a reasonable time and place, but this privilege must not be abused to the annoyance of the secretary. The same principle applies to the minutes of the boards and committees, their records being accessible to members of the boards and committees but to no other." If a person is denied an "extract" of the session minutes by the session, under (*BCO* 10-4), a complaint could be taken to presbytery and if denied by presbytery, could be filed with the Standing Judicial Commission of the General Assembly.

11. *What is the difference between divesting a minister against his will and deposing him?*

"To divest" is to remove from office without judicial process. Therefore, a minister may be divested without censure. "To divest a minister from office against his will" under (*BCO* 13-2, 34-10) is to remove a minister from office who has been without call for not more than three years or who has not been engaged in the regular discharge of his official functions because it is, in the opinion of the presbytery, due to his unacceptability to the church. "To depose from office," is to remove the minister from office with censure (*BCO* 30).

12. *When can a Teaching Elder labor outside presbytery bounds?*

Laboring outside the bounds of presbytery means to be engaged in a ministry that is not under the direct authority of the presbytery (i.e., out of ecclesiastical jurisdiction), such as a pastoral charge. A PCA minister laboring in such a ministry remains under the authority of presbytery even though his particular ministry is "outside" of presbytery's immediate oversight. The presbytery may review the terms of call to that ministry, but it does not have authority to approve the terms. For example, a PCA minister without call who takes a position teaching history at a non-PCA denominational college is not accepting another call any more than if he accepted a job teaching algebra at a public high school, or a job at a retail store. In other words, it is a job and not a ministerial calling. If he were teaching Bible or theology, however, and he wanted to maintain his status as a PCA minister he would need to seek and secure the approval of the presbytery (*BCO* 8-4; 13-2; 20-1).



13. *Are the requirements for an honorably retired teaching elder laboring outside of presbytery bounds (i.e., out of ecclesiastical jurisdiction) in an independent work, the same as for a teaching elder who is not honorably retired?*

In the BCO 8-7, 13-2, the issue becomes what is the court of jurisdiction. Whether he is honorably retired or not, in a work within the jurisdiction and bounds of presbytery, the court of authority and accountability is still his presbytery. The distinction is particularly noted because the honorably retired teaching elder does not have the same requirements of attendance at presbytery meetings or of reporting annually, as do those ministers without call or those laboring out of bounds. The presbytery would be advised to ensure that the honorably retired teaching elder, laboring out of bounds, would continue to have “full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our church.” (BCO 8-7, 24-9).

14. *When can a member of a court have his dissent/objection recorded?*

When a ruling elder disagrees with a motion or proposal that is pending before a session, he may seek to persuade the session to adopt his point of view. After the decision has been made by the session there are several options open to him, such as dissent, protest, objection, complaint, or motion to rescind an action previously adopted. Any member of a court who has a right to vote on a question, and is not satisfied with the action taken by that court is entitled to have a dissent or protest recorded (BCO 45-1 for full quote).

A dissent is a declaration on the part of one or more members of a minority, expressing a different opinion from the majority in its action on any issue before the court, and may be accompanied with the reasons on which it is founded (BCO 45-2). A protest is a more solemn and formal declaration by members of a minority (BCO 45-3 for full quote). An objection is a declaration by one or more members of a court who did not have the right to vote on an appeal or complaint (BCO 45-4 for full quote). If a dissent, protest, or objection is couched in temperate language, and is respectful to the court, it shall be recorded (BCO 45-5 for full quote). A complaint is stronger than a dissent, protest, or objection in that a complaint is a judicial process, which may carry the issue to a higher church court (BCO 43-1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

15. *What are the proper procedures for rescinding, repealing or annulling actions of a previous presbytery meeting?*

A motion to reconsider an action would be out of order if it were made by someone who voted with the minority: “The motion can be made by any member of the committee who *did not vote with the losing side*; or, in other words, the maker of the motion to *Reconsider* can be one who voted with the prevailing side, or one who did not vote at all, or even was absent” (*Robert’s Rules of Order*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. §37). At a later meeting, however, a person who voted in the minority may make a motion to rescind a previous action...In contrast to the case of the motion to *Reconsider*, there is no time limit on making these motions after the adoption of the measure to which they are applied, and they can be moved by any member, regardless of how he voted on the original question.” It would, however, require an affirmative vote of a majority of the entire membership to pass. Moreover, there are limitations on what may be rescinded (*RRO*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. §35). In short, anyone can make the motion to rescind regardless of how he voted on the matter at the previous meeting. It must be seconded. It is debatable. If no prior notice is given, or if there is no statement of the intention of making the motion given in the call of the meeting, a two-thirds vote is needed to pass the motion. If prior notice is given, or if there is a statement of the intention of making the motion given in the call of the meeting, a simple majority vote is needed to pass the motion.

*16. How thoroughly should a minister coming from another denomination be examined (BCO 13-6)?*

The traditional interpretation of BCO 13-6 has been that a minister coming from another denomination should be examined in knowledge and views in Christian experience, theology, the Sacraments and church government. BCO 21-4, especially those parts dealing with licensure, have not been required (e.g., preaching a sermon before presbytery). In other words, a presbytery should satisfy itself that the man has the requisite degrees, biblical languages and can answer knowledge and views questions. If he is found lacking in these areas, a three-fourths vote of presbytery is required to omit or waive these requirements.

It is helpful to note that BCO 13-6 was amended a number of years ago to include “shall examine them thoroughly in knowledge.” Prior to the amendment, the presbytery was only required to examine a man from another denomination with regard to “views” only (just like a PCA minister transferring into another presbytery). This amendment history sheds light on the former practice; the intent of adding “knowledge” was to ensure that men from other denominations not only held confessional views but could also demonstrate how they held them.

*17. Can licensure and ordination exams be combined at the same meeting?*

There are no precedents about a presbytery holding or not holding licensure and ordination exams at the same meeting. It has been done when it seemed to presbytery to be appropriate. A case-by-case approach would be in order. (Presbytery still needs to make sure that internship requirements are satisfied, BCO 19.)

*18. What is the procedure involving the restitution of a Teaching Elder to his ministerial office?*

Only the presbytery that imposed the censure of deposition may lift that censure (BCO 37-8, 9.a) and restore him to ministerial office. If the censure was excommunication from the sacrament of the Lord’s Table and deposition from office, there is a different procedure. Restoration to the sacrament would come through a PCA church session. He would need to join a PCA church (by reaffirmation of faith) and make clear that he had been excommunicated previously. It would be wise for the session to communicate with the clerk of presbytery and receive the particulars. If the session were satisfied with his repentance, they could receive him as a communicant member and remove the censure of excommunication (BCO 37-9.b.; 1-3; 6-4; 57-4, 5, 6). At that point he would be a communicant member of the PCA again, but still not a minister. Though a session would be the court to restore an excommunicated minister to the Lord’s Table, it would certainly be appropriate for the former minister to appear before the presbytery that disciplined him and express his repentance.

*19. How are we to understand BCO 38-3, 4?*

BCO 38-3, 4 allows for a member to withdraw his membership from a church. Both sections also indicate that the session should seek to work pastorally with the member before acceding to the request. If pastoral efforts do not persuade the member, then the session should take no further action but erase his name from the roll and record the circumstances in the minutes. If there are no charges pending or judicial process already begun, the session cannot begin judicial process after receiving the request to withdraw. If a judicial process had already begun, then the session could either erase the name or proceed with and conclude judicial process even in the member's absence. With regard to dealing with a spouse who desires to withdraw while the other spouse does not, the session has to treat the request on its own merit, not as a family issue (of course, pastoral care should be attempted as mentioned above).

20. *Can a presbytery take up a matter from a local church without a complaint or appeal?*

No, if only from a rumor; yes, if through review of records – but it cannot overturn an action without a complaint or appeal from the member(s) of the church. If members were charged by the session and wished to take their case to presbytery, the proper procedure for them to follow would be to submit to a trial by the session and then appeal to presbytery (BCO 42-2). If they did not submit to a trial, they may not appeal to presbytery (BCO 42-2). If they have a complaint, a complaint must first be lodged with the session and the session must have the opportunity to deal with the complaint (BCO 43-2; 43-3). One may not take a complaint to presbytery and bypass the session. In considering a case that is properly before it, the presbytery may “annul the whole or any part of the action of the lower court against which the complaint has been made, or send the matter back to the lower court with instructions for a new hearing” (BCO 43-10), if the case is a complaint. If the case is an appeal, “The decision of the higher court may be to affirm in whole or in part; to reverse in whole or in part; to render the decision that should have been rendered; or to remand the case to the lower court for a new trial” (BCO 42-9).

21. *Can a presbytery discipline a church session with a charge of disobedience?*

The BCO does not give this authority to a presbytery. However, a presbytery has the power “to see that the lawful injunctions of the higher courts are obeyed” (BCO 13-9e). Note that this power has to do with “lawful injunctions;” that is, properly determined decisions. Note also that the power of the church is moral and spiritual, ministerial and declarative (BCO Preliminary Preface, II, Preliminary Principles, 7, 8, and chapter 3). No court of the church has coercive or civil power over another court.

22. *Can a presbytery require a committee of presbytery to visit a church without a session’s permission?*

As determined by Judicial Case #48, 1985 (PCA Digest, Vol. I, p. 341), BCO 11-4 reads in part, “The jurisdiction of these courts is limited by the express provisions of the Constitution.” More specifically, BCO 13-9 “contains no express provision, which meaning is clear and undebatable, as would permit a presbytery to require the receiving of a presbytery committee’s visit without a request by or a specific problem in the session or congregation in question” (PCA Digest, p. 342). In other words, the BCO does not give this authority to a presbytery.

23. *How should a judicial commission act and report according to BCO 15-3?*

The judicial commission of the presbytery is charged with investigating, absolving or indicting, conducting a trial, rendering a judgment, and presenting a written report to presbytery. The report is not final until it is received by presbytery, which votes to approve or not approve the report. If the report is not approved, the presbytery can choose to hear the case as a body or elect a new commission to rehear the case.

24. *May a presbytery nominate to a General Assembly Committee a man other than the alternate from their presbytery (who will automatically be considered)?*

Yes, under BCO 14-1, 11 and RAO 7-4 g. Reasoning: (1) Once a presbytery has nominated a man and he is elected by an action of the General Assembly as an alternate member of a General Assembly Committee or Agency, he is the Assembly’s elected member (somewhat analogous to a motion that is being made and seconded is the property of the body and may not be withdrawn without the consent of the body). (2) RAO 7-4 c is a not an absolute (note the qualifying term “ordinarily”) and (3) RAO 7-4, g. distinguishes between “new nominee” and “alternates not assuming any vacancies during a year.”

25. *May an alternate member of a General Assembly Committee or Agency serve on a Committee of Commissioners? RAO 13-2?*

No. RAO 13-2 states, "Commissioners serving on Permanent Committees or sub-committees of the Assembly or the staffs thereof are not eligible to serve on any Committees of Commissioners." An alternate is a committee member who votes only in the absence of a principal member, but he is a member, nevertheless.

26. *Is it constitutional for a session to use a judicial commission to adjudicate a judicial case, or must all judicial cases be heard by the entire session?*

This question arises in the context of some churches with thousands of members and dozens of elders on the session finding it impractical to conduct or try all judicial cases before the entire session. It is constitutional for the session to elect a judicial commission. However, the session must use discretion and must address the wisdom and advisability of electing a judicial commission to adjudicate a judicial case. The primary, though not exclusive, section of the BCO relating to the issue of commissions is 15-1:

"A commission differs from an ordinary committee in that while a committee is appointed to examine, consider and report, a commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it, except in the case of judicial commissions of a presbytery appointed under BCO 15-3. A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted, to the court appointing it. Upon such submission this record shall be entered on the minutes of the court appointing, except in the case of a presbytery commission serving as a session or a judicial commission as set forth in BCO 15-3. When a commission is appointed to serve as an interim session, its actions are the actions of a session, not a presbytery. Every commission of a presbytery or session must submit complete minutes and a report of its activities at least once annually to the court which commissioned it."

A session may elect to use a judicial commission to adjudicate judicial cases for several reasons:

- BCO 15 deals with "Ecclesiastical Commissions" for all three levels of the courts of the church. The presbytery is explicitly named in 15-1, 15-2, and 15-3. The General Assembly is explicitly named in 15-4, 15-5, and 16-6. The session is explicitly named in 15-1 in the last sentence. In that reference, it is not a commission of presbytery *acting* as a session, but a commission *of the session*. "Every commission of a presbytery or session [emphasis added] must submit complete minutes and a report of its activities at least once annually to the court which commissioned it."
- The BCO is not exactly analogous to secular civil and criminal law. The BCO is not written as an exhaustive catalog of most possible eventualities, but is primarily a set of principles, with deference to lower courts, and the expectation that courts will use their discretion. Indeed, our Constitution is written in such a way that it sets forth general principles, setting acceptable parameters on many instances, and giving exacting details in a few instances. For example, on the issue of baptism, WCF XXVIII.7 states that, "Baptism is but once to be administered unto any person." Therefore, it would not be proper for a PCA minister to re-baptize someone who had previously received a valid Christian baptism. A church member might ask a PCA pastor for a baptism by immersion because he or she had been baptized by pouring and now wants to be immersed. The PCA pastor would refuse to re-baptize such a person. But what about the validity of Roman Catholic baptisms? The issue has been addressed by General Assemblies in America in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries each coming to the same conclusion, that some sessions may accept Roman Catholic baptisms and some may reject Roman Catholic baptisms. WCF chapter II "Of God and of the Holy Trinity" is very exacting,

following the Ancient Creeds; chapter III, “Of God’s Eternal Decree,” however, may be interpreted to be infralapsarian, or supralapsarian, though sublapsarianism is definitely excluded. *The Directory of Worship* was originally written as a replacement for the *Book of Common Prayer*. The *BCP* was prescribed worship, a prescribed liturgy that is to be followed word-for-word, with little variation allowed, with a premium set on uniformity; the *DW* is directed worship, essentially setting forth a collection of rubrics, or directions to be followed, allowing for variations, with a premium set on liberty of conscience. The PCA has taken it a step further by adding a preface to the *DW*, declaring only chapters 56, 57, 58 to be part of the Constitution. Some erroneously look on our Constitution in a quasi-congregational perspective, thinking of it as simply advisory in all respects and binding in no respects. It is also erroneous to look upon our constitution as if it were canon law of a hierarchical church or a secular law code that is highly detailed. The insistence that a session may not erect a judicial commission is, in my opinion, based on the latter erroneous perspective.

- *BCO* 32-11 speaks of a “Judicial Committee”:

“In every process, if deemed expedient there may be a committee appointed, which shall be called the Judicial Committee, and whose duty it shall be to digest and arrange all the papers, and to prescribe, under the direction of the court, the whole order of the proceedings. The members of this committee shall be entitled, notwithstanding their performance of this duty, to sit and vote in the case as members of the court.”

The judicial committee of *BCO* 32-11 is not a commission. The role of the judicial committee is explicitly stated. The erection of a judicial committee by any level of the church courts does *not* negate the right of the church court to form a judicial commission, if it so desires.

Having given a rationale for the constitutional permissibility of the use of a sessional judicial commission, it would be helpful to deal with some objections.

- It may be objected that only Presbytery and General Assembly Judicial Commissions are explicitly named in the *BCO*. The presbytery is explicitly named in 15-1, 15-2, and 15-3. The General Assembly is explicitly named in 15-4, 15-5, and 16-6. The answer is that the session having the power to erect commissions is explicitly named in 15-1 in the last sentence. In that reference, it is not a commission of presbytery *acting* as a session, but a commission *of the session*. A commission may be erected by the session to fulfill virtually any of the responsibilities of the session (see *BCO* 12-5) including, “To inquire into the knowledge, principles and Christian conduct of the church members, under its care; to censure those found delinquent.”
- It may be objected that, since there are no step-by-step procedures for an appeal arising from a trial conducted by a judicial commission of the session, as there are for a presbytery commission (15-3) or the General Assembly’s Standing Judicial Commission (15-5, c.[4]), then no sessional judicial commission is possible. The answer is that *BCO* 15-1 gives the power to the session to erect a judicial commission. Exact detailed procedures for handling cases by a sessional judicial commission need not be included in the *BCO*. Though appellate civil or criminal procedures are codified in law, the *BCO* is not written as an exhaustive catalog of most possible eventualities, but is primarily a set of principles, with deference to lower courts, and the expectation that courts will use their discretion. Even the General Assembly’s Standing Judicial Commission specifies most of the details of its procedures in the “Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission.” Some presbyteries use the “Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission” as guidelines for their procedures. It seems to me that a session could have similar appellate procedures, 1) the sessional judicial

commission would make its report to the session on each given case committed to the sessional judicial commission, 2) the session would then, without debate, approve or disapprove the judgment, following the principles of *BCO* 15-3; 3) if the session disapproved the judgment, it could appoint another commission to try the case, or the session could elect to try the case before the session as a whole; 4) or the session could refer any strictly constitutional issue(s) to a study committee to report back to the session; 5) a session that uses a sessional judicial commission, may be well advised to use the procedures of the Standing Judicial Commission, of a review of each sessional judicial commission's decision, and/or a rehearing of the case by the full session (see section 18 of the "Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission"); 6) if the decision of the sessional judicial commission were averse to a church member, and the session approved the judgment, the church member in question, could appeal directly to presbytery, following the procedures of *BCO* 42. A particular church member's appellate rights are not removed or diminished by the use of a sessional judicial commission as long as just procedures are followed.

- It may be objected that *BCO* 15-3 speaks of a presbytery's judicial commission, but does not mention a sessional judicial commission. The answer is that this is an argument from silence. *BCO* 15-3 is written for presbytery use. The session is explicitly named in 15-1 in the last sentence. In that reference, it is not a commission of presbytery *acting* as a session, but a commission *of the session*. Though *BCO* 15-3 refers only to presbytery, *BCO* 15-1 does include the session and gives sessions the authority to erect many sorts of commissions, including judicial commissions authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business [judicial cases] referred to them.

- It may be objected that *BCO* Chapter 30 refers to censures inflicted by "church courts," that a sessional judicial commission is not a court, and, therefore, a session may not utilize a sessional judicial commission. The answer is that a commission is authorized by the court appointing it to deliberate and conclude the business referred to it. The actions of a commission are the actions of the court itself.

- It may be objected that the court of original jurisdiction of members of particular churches is the session (*BCO* 33-1, 33-2) that a sessional judicial commission is not a court, and, therefore, a session may not utilize a sessional judicial commission. The answer is that a commission is authorized by the court appointing it to deliberate and conclude the business referred to it. The actions of a commission are the actions of the court itself. Again this goes back to *BCO* 15-1 and *BCO* 15-1 does include session and gives sessions the authority to erect many sorts of commissions, including judicial commissions authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business [judicial cases] referred to them.

- It may be objected that the use of a sessional judicial commission is merely a pragmatic expedient, particularly in larger churches that may have thousands of members and scores of elders. That, of course is not a constitutional argument; the issue is whether the use of a sessional judicial commission is *constitutional*. To assert that sheer pragmatism and mere expediency lie at the root of the use of a sessional judicial commission is to question the motives of fellow elders. It could be argued, on the other hand that larger churches may either ignore church discipline due to the magnitude of the task of trying dozens of cases before the full session, or they may use sessional judicial commissions to fulfill justly and responsibly the duty of church discipline.

27. *Is it constitutional for a presbytery to conduct a presbytery meeting via teleconferencing to consider a brief docket?*

BCO 13-4 while speaking to the matter of a quorum states, “Any three ministers belonging to the presbytery, together with at least three ruling elders, being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business. However, any presbytery, by a majority vote of those present at a stated meeting, may fix its own quorum provided it is not smaller than the quorum stated in this paragraph.” *Robert’s Rules of Order*, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition speaks to the issue:

“The coming of the internet and the widespread use of email and the fax machine have stirred interest in the concept of an “electronic meeting.” This edition notes that the opportunity for simultaneous aural communication among all participants is central to the deliberative character of the meeting. It recognizes, therefore, that meetings may be conducted by videoconference or teleconference, when authorized by the bylaws and when regulated by special rules of order and standing rules specifying such things as how recognition is to be sought and the floor obtained. On the other hand, it warns that though e-mail or faxes may provide a suitable substitute for postal mail in the issuance of calls for meetings or the conduct of mail voting, they are not suited for the conduct of the deliberative process under the precedents and procedures common to parliamentary law” (p. xx).

“Efforts to conduct the deliberative process by postal or electronic mail or facsimile (fax) transmission – which are not recommended – must be expressly authorized by the bylaws and should be supported by special rules of order and standing rules as appropriate, since so many situations unprecedented in parliamentary law may arise and since many procedures common to parliamentary law are not applicable” (see pp. 482-483) (p. 20).

“A *meeting* of an assembly is a single official gathering of its members in one room or area to transact business for a length of time during which there is no cessation of proceedings and the members do not separate, unless for a short *recess*, as defined below. (For modification of the “one-room-or-area” requirement when the bylaws authorize meeting by videoconference or teleconference, see pages 482-483)” (pp. 79-80).

“Conduct of Business in Committees...The bylaws may authorize a board or committee (or even a relatively small assembly) to meet by videoconference or teleconference. If they do, then such meeting must be conducted by a technology that allows all persons participating to hear each other at the same time (and, if a videoconference, to see each other as well). The opportunity for simultaneous communication is central to the deliberative character of a meeting, and is what distinguishes it from attempts to do business by postal or electronic mail or by fax (see page 2). It is advisable to adopt special rules of order and standing rules as appropriate, to specify precisely how recognition is to be sought and the floor obtained during videoconferences and teleconferences (pp 482-483).

In April 2002, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly sought the advice of the CCB (RAO 7-2 1) as to the constitutionality of presbytery meetings, (meetings of the court as a whole, not committee or commission meetings), being conducted by videoconferencing or teleconferencing. It was the opinion of the Stated Clerk that BCO 13-4 requires that a meeting of presbytery must be “at the time and place appointed,” i.e., a “one-room-or-area” meeting. The CCB concurred with the opinion of the Stated Clerk (Minutes, CCB, April 23, 2002).

**PLEASE NOTE:** The 2021 General Assembly sent to the presbyteries a change to the BCO regarding virtual meetings. If that change passes, this information will be updated.

28. *Must a congregation approve a severance package to be given to a minister whose pastoral call is about to be dissolved by presbytery?*

No, a congregation does not approve a severance package for a minister when the congregation votes to petition presbytery to dissolve a pastoral relationship. The congregation approves the terms of the call initially (*BCO* 20-6), but the *BCO* does not directly speak to the issue of a severance package. Therefore, it would be a budgetary matter to be approved by the session (*BCO* 12-5 b).

29. *What is the status of "Presbytery Standing Rules or By-laws" and "Church Standing Rules or By-laws" in relation to the Book of Church Order?*

As a matter of general principle "Presbytery Standing Rules or By-laws" and "Church Standing Rules or By-laws" may complement the *Book of Church Order* but may not contradict the *Book of Church Order*. In some instances allowable parameters for variation from the *BCO* are stated (*BCO* 12-1, 13-4). However, a local church or a presbytery may not adopt procedures that violate the rights of persons or entities as specified in the *BCO*. The General Assembly operates with the "Constitution of the Church" being its primary authority, "Rules of Assembly Operation" as a secondary authority, and *Robert's Rules of Order* as a tertiary authority. Likewise, "Presbytery Standing Rules or By-laws" and "Church Standing Rules or By-laws" are a secondary authority to the "Constitution of the Church."



## The Presbyterian Church in America Non-hierarchal Presbyterianism

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The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) was founded in 1973 as a denomination with the vision to be “Faithful to the Scriptures, True to the Reformed Faith, and Obedient the Great Commission.” The PCA was begun by Ruling Elders and Ministers who had sought over two generations to reverse trends in our former denominational connection which we believed to be (1) a departure from the evangelical Reformed Faith and (2) an emergence of an increasingly coercive denominational church polity.<sup>1</sup> So the PCA emerged because of both theological and church governance issues.

Church polity is based not only on explicit scriptural teachings, but also on biblical principles, biblical precedents, common sense, Christian prudence, and historical-circumstantial factors (*Westminster Confession of Faith* I-6).<sup>2</sup> All of these have affected the PCA’s polity, which has resulted in a grass-roots Presbyterianism.

There is a significant difference between the PCA’s Presbyterian polity and the polity of hierarchal Churches. In an hierarchal Church such as the Roman Catholic Church there is “canon law” which deals in great detail about what is to be done in numerous

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<sup>1</sup> For personal accounts of some “founding fathers” regarding the beginnings of the PCA, detailing examples of these two roots causes for establishing the PCA, see *How the Gold Has Become Dim*, Morton H. Smith. Greenville, SC: Greenville Theological Seminary Press, 1973; *I Am Reminded*, Kennedy Smartt, privately published, 1998; *To God All Praise and Glory*, Paul G. Settle. Atlanta: PCA Administrative Committee, 1998; and *Hitherto: A Biographical Testimony*, Harold Borchert, n.d., privately published. All are available from the PCA Christian Education and Publications Bookstore, [www.cepbookstore.com](http://www.cepbookstore.com).

<sup>2</sup> “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word: and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, [emphasis added] common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.” The Westminster Confession of Faith is the doctrinal Standard of the PCA. It was originally written by the Westminster Assembly in London 1643-1648, was adopted by the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) shortly thereafter. It was adopted by colonial Presbyterians in America in 1729 (with a few revisions) and adopted by the PCA in 1973.

situations. In a Church with Episcopal polity (ruled by bishops), bishops exercise ecclesiastical authority over churches and often hold title to local church property.

One of the features of the Protestant Reformation was the restoration of Presbyterian church governance in a number of Continental Reformed Churches and in the Church of Scotland. The Church of Scotland became the Mother Church of Presbyterian Churches around the world. It is the understanding of a number of historical theologians that the Church of the First and Second Centuries had a Presbyterian governance, but the Church developed an Episcopal governance by the mid-Second Century due to several circumstantial factors.<sup>3</sup> But within Presbyterianism there have been, and still are, two perspectives; an hierarchal, top-down view and a non-hierarchal, bottom-up view. These two different perspectives were evident at the Westminster Assembly.<sup>4</sup> When colonial Presbyterians organized as a General Assembly in 1789 they adapted Presbyterian church governance to the free church situation in America, in contrast to the state church system in the Britain and Europe. Additionally, the first American General Assembly adopted some Preliminary Principles authored by John Witherspoon.<sup>5</sup> Those preliminary

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<sup>3</sup> For a biblical-exegetical and historical argument that the Church of the First and Second Centuries had a Presbyterian polity carried over from the Old Testament and synagogue system, see J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1953, reprint of 1913 edition), 181-269. Dr. Lightfoot was the Anglican Bishop of Durham in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as a New Testament and Patristic scholar at Cambridge University. For an explanation of the factors producing the episcopacy from the mid-Second Century forward, see L. Roy Taylor, "Presbyterianism" in *Who Runs the Church: Four Views on Church Government* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> For an account of the origins and development of these two types of Presbyterianism in The British Isles and America, see Paul R. Gilchrist, *Distinctives of Biblical Presbyterianism* (Atlanta: World Reformed Fellowship, 2002). Gilchrist demonstrates that an hierarchal, top-down, aristocratic Presbyterianism was advocated by some commissioners to the Westminster Assembly (ex. Samuel Rutherford and Robert Baillie) in response to the advocacy of Congregationalism by a few commissioners who later became Congregationalists. But a non-hierarchal, bottom-up, democratic types of Presbyterianism was the practice of Continental Reformed Churches and advocated by some Westminster commissioners such as George Gillespie and Alexander Henderson. Moreover, the Church of Scotland established a General Assembly first, then Presbyteries, then congregations. In colonial America the process was the opposite, congregations first, then Presbyteries, then synods, and finally a General Assembly. Presbyterianism in America was more of a grass-roots movement.

<sup>5</sup> The Rev. John Witherspoon was the first President of the College of New Jersey (Princeton University), the only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence. The by-word in England concerning the American Revolution, "The Americans have run off with a Presbyterian parson," referred to Witherspoon's influence. Several of the Founding Fathers of the American Republic were his students at Princeton (ex. James Madison) who were involved in the development of the Constitution of the United States and the writing of the Federalist Papers urging the adoption of the Constitution. There are several parallels between the Presbyterian governance adopted by the First American Presbyterian General Assembly and the U.S. Constitution. These "Preliminary Principles" are:

1. God alone is Lord of the conscience and has left it free from any doctrines or commandments of men (a) which are in any respect contrary to the Word of God, or (b) which, in regard to matters of faith and worship, are not governed by the Word of God. Therefore, the rights of private judgment in all matters that respect religion are universal and inalienable. No religious constitution should be supported by the civil power further than may be necessary for protection and security equal and common to all others.
2. In perfect consistency with the above principle, every Christian Church, or union or association of particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of

principles espoused a *non-hierarchal*, bottom-up, from-the-ground-up, democratic Presbyterianism.

As we see it, over the years the larger Presbyterian Church (now called the Presbyterian Church, USA) underwent a metamorphosis from a democratic type of Presbyterianism into an hierarchal Presbyterianism. *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church, USA is now written as “church law” and is stated in much greater detail than the BCO of the PCA because the PCUSA is hierarchal Presbyterianism with the emphasis on the higher courts of the Church directing the lower courts. The PCUSA BCO deals much more extensively with detailed procedures covering a wide variety of situations. Therefore, the PC(USA) *BCO* is much longer than the PCA BCO. Moreover, in recent civil court cases regarding disputes over local church property the PCUSA argues that the PCUSA is an hierarchal church with the Presbytery being tantamount to a bishop.

By contrast, the PCA is a *non-hierarchal*, grass-roots type of Presbyterianism. One of the major reasons for the formation of the PCA was to revert to a democratic Presbyterianism. The PCA BCO is written more *as a set of principles*, emphasizing the use of discretion and wisdom by the lower courts. The “Preface” of the BCO lists “The Preliminary Principles” that are not merely an introductory statement to the constitution

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its internal government which Christ has appointed. In the exercise of this right it may, notwithstanding, err in making the terms of communion either too lax or too narrow; yet even in this case, it does not infringe upon the liberty or the rights of others, but only makes an improper use of its own.

3. Our blessed Saviour, for the edification of the visible Church, which is His body, has appointed officers not only to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, but also to exercise discipline for the preservation both of truth and duty. It is incumbent upon these officers and upon the whole Church in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous, observing in all cases the rules contained in the Word of God.
4. Godliness is founded on truth. A test of truth is its power to promote holiness according to our Saviour's rule, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). No opinion can be more pernicious or more absurd than that which brings truth and falsehood upon the same level. On the contrary, there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise it would be of no consequence either to discover truth or to embrace it.
5. While, under the conviction of the above principle, it is necessary to make effective provision that all who are admitted as teachers be sound in the faith, there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good character and principles may differ. In all these it is the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other.
6. Though the character, qualifications and authority of church officers are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method of officer investiture, the power to elect persons to the exercise of authority in any particular society resides in that society.
7. All church power, whether exercised by the body in general, or by representation, is only ministerial and declarative since the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice. No church judicatory may make laws to bind the conscience. All church courts may err through human frailty, yet it rests upon them to uphold the laws of Scripture though this obligation be lodged with fallible men.
8. Since ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral or spiritual in its object, and not attended with any civil effects, it can derive no force whatever, but from its own justice, the approbation of an impartial public, and the countenance and blessing of the great Head of the Church.

or historical information, but are an integral part of the constitution, or the lenses through which the rest of the BCO is to be viewed. It is not envisioned that the PCA BCO would have detailed instructions on virtually every situation. When faced with situations and circumstances that are not dealt with in detail in the PCA BCO, sessions and presbyteries should exercise their own wisdom and discretion within the parameters of biblical principles and the constitution of the PCA, particularly the “Preliminary Principles,” (the constitution is the *BCO* and the *Westminster Standards*).<sup>6</sup> The voluntary nature of the PCA is explicitly stated in BCO 25-9; 25-10 regarding church property<sup>7</sup> and in BCO 25-11 regarding the process of a local church’s withdrawing from the denomination.<sup>8</sup> Both of these statements are consistent with the “Preliminary Principles.” In recent court cases involving employment law, the PCA successfully argued that as a *non-hierarchal denomination*, local church pastors and local church staff members are not employees of a Presbytery or the General Assembly.<sup>9</sup> The PCA argued that the relationship of a PCA

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<sup>6</sup> The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, which is subject to and subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the inerrant Word Of God, consists of its doctrinal standards set forth in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, together with the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, and the *Book of Church Order*, comprising the Form of Government, the Rules of Discipline and the Directory for Worship; all as adopted by the Church (BCO, Preface, § III).

<sup>7</sup> **25-9.** All particular churches shall be entitled to hold, own and enjoy their own local properties, without any right of reversion whatsoever to any Presbytery, General Assembly or any other courts hereafter created, trustees or other officers of such courts.

**25-10.** The provisions of this *BCO* 25 are to be construed as a solemn covenant whereby the Church as a whole promises never to attempt to secure possession of the property of any congregation against its will, whether or not such congregation remains within or chooses to withdraw from this body. All officers and courts of the Church are hereby prohibited from making any such attempt.

<sup>8</sup> **25-11.** While a congregation consists of all the communing members of a particular church, and in matters ecclesiastical the actions of such local congregation or church shall be in conformity with the provisions of this *Book of Church Order*, nevertheless, in matters pertaining to the subject matters referred to in this *BCO* 25, including specifically the right to affiliate with or become a member of this body or a Presbytery hereof and the right to withdraw from or to sever any affiliation of connection with this body or any Presbytery hereof, action may be taken by such local congregation or local church in accordance with the civil laws applicable to such local congregation or local church; and as long as such action is taken in compliance with such applicable civil laws, then such shall be the action of the local congregation or local church.

It is expressly recognized that each local congregation or local church shall be competent to function and to take actions covering the matters set forth herein as long as such action is in compliance with the civil laws with which said local congregation or local church must comply, and this right shall never be taken from said local congregation or local church without the express consent of and affirmative action of such local church or congregation.

Particular churches need remain in association with any court of this body only so long as they themselves so desire. The relationship is voluntary, based upon mutual love and confidence, and is in no sense to be maintained by the exercise of any force or coercion whatsoever. [Emphasis added]. A particular church may withdraw from any court of this body at any time for reasons which seem to it sufficient.

<sup>9</sup> See Susanne MacDonald vs. Grace Church, Seattle, Northwest Presbytery and the PCA, a Corporation, US District Court For the Western District of Washington at Seattle, and Federal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The District Court ruled that the Presbytery and General Assembly are not the employers of local

minister to a Presbytery is analogous to that of a lawyer with a bar association. The bar association examines the lawyer regarding expertise and character, but a law firm, not the bar, is the attorney's employer.

So, the PCUSA represents itself as a hierarchal denomination; the PCA represents itself as a *non-hierarchal* denomination.

The PCA is non-hierarchal in that: (1) local churches, Presbyteries, and the General Assembly are distinct and separate civil entities and (2) the authority of the Church is moral and spiritual, ministerial and declarative. Two entire chapters of the BCO (Chapters 3 and 11) are devoted to that explanation. Yet the PCA is spiritually united (*not civilly* connected) and Presbyterian churches are inter-dependent, not independent.<sup>10</sup> This connectionalism is expressed in our confessional theology, our system of government and discipline, and our cooperative ministry.<sup>11</sup> PCA founding fathers Cannada and Williamson so state in their book:

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PCA church pastors of local PCA church staff. The ruling was upheld by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Plaintiff filed six actions in various venues on the matter and did not prevail in any of them.

<sup>10</sup> Note that I define a connectional Church as follows: "By 'connectional' we mean that local churches see themselves as part of the larger Church, that local churches are not independent but are accountable to the larger Church, and that local churches do not minister alone but in cooperation with the larger Church." (Taylor, *Who Runs the Church*, p. 75). Such a definition does not require or even imply that churches must be civilly connected in order to be connectional.

<sup>11</sup> **Doctrinal Fidelity:** No system of church polity can absolutely guarantee theological integrity among its ministers and office-bearers. Apostasy and heresy have cropped up in branches of the Church with all types of church government. Nevertheless, Presbyterian church polity has built-in safeguards that will work, *if* the system is faithfully followed. First, a Reformed-Presbyterian Church has a binding confessional doctrinal standard that is not just an advisory consensus statement. Second, the doctrinal standards of a Reformed-Presbyterian Church are derived from scripture, relying upon the Holy Spirit, benefiting from the wisdom of the theological consensus of the Church throughout the ages. Finally, ministers and office-bearers are required to adhere to the biblical system of doctrine for ordination and continued ministry.

**Mutual Accountability:** In a Church with a Presbyterian-representative-connectional system, there is mutual accountability not only in doctrinal integrity, but also for one's manner of life. Historically, the Reformed-Presbyterian Churches have regarded the "marks of the Church" to be (1) the faithful preaching of the Word, (2) the proper administration of the sacraments, and (3) the practice of discipline. In a Presbyterian system the members of the local church are accountable to the elders of that church, ministers and churches are accountable to the presbytery, and presbyteries are accountable to the general assembly. There are carefully detailed procedures to be followed, once a judicial process of discipline has been instituted. Moreover, there is the possibility of appeal to the larger Church, the Presbytery, or even the General Assembly.

**Cooperative Ministry:** To be a Presbyterian Church involves not only a mutual commitment to a confessional doctrinal standard and mutual accountability, but also a commitment to cooperative ministry. That is based on an ecclesiology which posits that the Church is more than the local church, that local churches ministering together as a regional Church or national Church can accomplish more in ministry than local churches ministering separately. Because the Church is a covenant community of the people of God, local churches are not independent, but interdependent, not only in doctrinal confessions and accountability, and in cooperative ministry. This is not to say that churches with other forms of church government cannot have effective cooperative ministries, but that for Presbyterians cooperative ministry is a matter of theological principle, not merely practical strategy. (Taylor. *Op. cit.* pp. 96-97).

The thing that is special about the PCA is that there is a clear and vital spiritual connection between the Congregations, the Presbyteries, and the General Assembly. Accordingly it is entirely proper to designate the polity of the PCA as being “connectional” as long as it is made clear that the connection is a spiritual connection between the Congregations, the Presbyteries and the General Assembly and there is no connection of any kind between the civil entities formed by them. The members of the Congregations, the Presbyteries and the General Assembly make up the membership of the respective civil entities formed by them and are, therefore, in complete control of those civil entities. *Accordingly, since there is a vital spiritual connection between the Congregations, the Presbyteries, and the General Assembly in the PCA and each has complete control of the civil entity formed by it, the PCA does not consist of a group of independent local churches that are free to teach and promote whatever they see fit.*<sup>12</sup>

When a person joins a congregation he voluntarily takes a vow to submit himself to the government and discipline of the church (*BCO* 57-5.5). When a ruling elder or deacon is ordained he vows to submit himself unto his brethren in the Lord (*BCO* 24-5.5) and affirms that he believes that the form of government and discipline of the PCA conform to general principles of biblical polity (*BCO* 24-5.3). Ministers take similar vows upon ordination (*BCO* 21-5.3, 4). When a local church is constituted as a church the congregation as a whole promises to operate on the principles of the faith and order [doctrine and church governance] of the PCA (*BCO* 5-8.3). When an existing congregation transfers into a PCA presbytery, the elders of the church, as representatives of the congregation, vow to uphold the doctrine and polity of the PCA (*BCO* 13-8).

When members, ruling elders, deacons and ministers take such vows they voluntarily place themselves under the *spiritual* authority of the Church. When ruling elders, deacons and ministers affirm that they believe that the form of government and discipline of the PCA conform to general principles of biblical polity, they voluntarily pledge themselves to exercise their office in accordance with the constitution of the PCA. Those who have taken such vows have a moral responsibility (though not a legal obligation) to abide by the decision, judgment or order of a church court of original jurisdiction, or they may carry the matter forward until a higher court decides it (*BCO* 43 details the complaint process; *BCO* 42 details the appeals process).<sup>13</sup> By taking the vows of membership or ordination one agrees to abide by the authority of the court of original jurisdiction and higher courts as well because of the spiritual connectionalism of the Church (*BCO* 11-3, 11-4). Once the higher court has handled the matter finally, there is, because of the vows they have taken and theological beliefs they have espoused, a moral responsibility (though not a legal obligation) to abide by the final disposition of the matter as long as they are members of the PCA. A person may think that he cannot in

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<sup>12</sup> Robert C. Cannada and W. Jack Williamson. *The Historic Polity of the PCA*. Pp. 34-35. (Italics in original).

<sup>13</sup> In PCA parlance an appeal deals only with a person who has undergone an ecclesiastical trial; a complaint deals with all other constitutional irregularities.

good conscience accept the final disposition of the matter after the complaint or appellate process is complete, in which case he may leave the PCA without coercion.

It should be noted that all members, sessions, Presbyteries and the General Assembly of the PCA are morally obligated to follow the constitution of the PCA. Blind obedience, however, may not be required by any church officer or church court.<sup>14</sup> Church courts that violate the constitution of the PCA may themselves be subject to ecclesiastical trial.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the Presbyterian Church in America is Presbyterian (governed by elders elected by the people whom they represent), yet a democratic type of Presbyterianism; it is connectional, but non-hierarchical, in that the power of the Church is not civil or coercive but moral and spiritual, ministerial and declarative; it is constitutional not authoritarian, that is, all of her members, officers, and church courts are to operate within the framework of the constitution of the Church and may not resort to arbitrary use of ecclesiastical authority that is contrary to the Church constitution.

Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, “The Rules of Assembly Operation,” “The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission,” and/or *Robert’s Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA or staff members of the Office of the Stated Clerk are for information only and are not authoritative rulings that may only be made by the courts of the Church. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not represent parties in ecclesiastical judicial cases. Parties to potential cases or cases in process are responsible for their own constitutional and procedural knowledge and understanding. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not give legal advice. When legal advice is needed, professional legal counsel should be secured from one familiar with applicable laws and regulations.

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<sup>14</sup> *Westminster Confession of Faith* XX-II. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in any thing, contrary to His Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship. So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also. [Emphasis added].

<sup>15</sup> BCO 40-6. In process against a lower court, the trial shall be conducted according to the rules provided for process against individuals, so far as they may be applicable.

## PCA CALL PACKAGE GUIDELINES

The 40th PCA General Assembly originally approved the PCA Call Package Guidelines designed by Geneva Benefits.

A survey of PCA Teaching Elders revealed that a significant majority of ordained ministers in the PCA desire more guidance in structuring their call packages. In response, Geneva Benefits created the Guidelines. The Guidelines provide practical guidance regarding call package content and structure, covering the essential elements of TE call packages and review other important compensation and tax issues affecting ministers. REs, TEs and TE spouses are encouraged to review this information to enhance their understanding of well-structured call packages.

The Call Package Guidelines have been updated to include new material based on feedback from our churches and presbyteries. Sections enhanced include those related to salary and the shortcomings of lump-sum call packages; sections added include proper uses of the document, counseling & coaching and sabbaticals.

Copies of the new version of the Call Package Guidelines may be requested from Geneva's office by phone at 678-825-1260, by email at [contact@genevabenefits.org](mailto:contact@genevabenefits.org), or downloaded from Geneva's website – <https://genevabenefits.org/call-package-guidelines/>.

**If you are looking for the Sample Form for Terms of Call, it is on the next page.**



## APPENDIX J

### SAMPLE FORM FOR TERMS OF CALL

Subject to the approval of the \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery, the \_\_\_\_\_ (*Session, or Congregation, or Session on behalf of the congregation*) of \_\_\_\_\_ Church in \_\_\_\_\_ earnestly calls you, \_\_\_\_\_, to undertake the office of \_\_\_\_\_ in our congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. That you may be free from worldly care and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to provide you with the following:

Annual Cash Salary & Housing Allowance, paid \_\_\_\_\_ (*semi-monthly, etc.*) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

The amount/portion dedicated to housing allowance will be determined by the Minister and approved by the Session before employment with the church in this new position and shall be reviewed prior to each fiscal year.

#### Primary Benefits

Social Security/Medicare Allowance: _____ % of salary + housing	\$ _____
Medical Insurance &/or Medicare Supplement Insurance (specific \$ amount)	\$ _____
Retirement Savings: _____ % of salary + housing	\$ _____
Long Term Disability Insurance: enough to replace _____ % of salary + housing	\$ _____
Life Insurance: amount equal to _____ x (salary + housing)	\$ _____
Equity Allowance if Minister living in a manse	\$ _____
Other _____	\$ _____

#### Secondary Benefits

Dental Insurance	\$ _____
Vision Insurance	\$ _____
Long Term Care Insurance	\$ _____

#### Temporary Benefits

Relocation expenses reimbursed up to a maximum of:	\$ _____
Other _____	\$ _____

Miscellaneous Paid Leaves per year. (Any specific church policies are described in a separate document.)

Vacation _____ days	Sick Leave _____ days
Educational Leave _____ days	Paternity Leave _____ days
Sabbatical Leave accrual _____ days	Funeral Leave _____ days

Any reimbursement of reasonable and necessary business expenses shall be in accord with a Session-adopted Accountable Reimbursement Plan, with a maximum amount specified in the annual church budget.

I, having moderated the \_\_\_\_\_ (*Session or Congregational*) meeting which extended a call to \_\_\_\_\_ for his ministerial services, do certify the call has been made in all respects according to the rules in the PCA *Book of Church Order* and the persons who signed the call were authorized to do so by vote of the \_\_\_\_\_ (*Session or Congregation*).

(Check if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ Authority to approve these Terms was delegated by the Congregation to the Session at a congregational meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

Meeting Moderator (sign) \_\_\_\_\_ Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_ Phone or e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_ Vote: # Yes = \_\_\_\_\_ # No = \_\_\_\_\_

Minister-Elect (sign) \_\_\_\_\_ Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Send a copy to the Presbytery Clerk.

## **Uniform Curriculum and Ordination Requirements**

L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk Emeritus, PCA

The BCO's ordinary educational requirements for ordination as a minister are stated in BCO 21-4:

An intern applying for ordination shall be required to present a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved college or university, and also a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved theological seminary or authentic testimonials of having completed a regular course of theological studies, or a certificate of completion of and endorsement from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America.

With the growth of two-year M.A. programs among seminaries, a question arises a two-year M.A. degree from a theological seminary meets the ordination requirements set forth in the BCO. If an M.A. is the only theological education the candidate has had, then the M.A. alone would not meet the educational requirements because a two-year M.A. degree does not meet the requirements of "a certificate of completion of and endorsement from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America." The Uniform Curriculum adopted by the General Assembly (see Minutes of the General Assembly, 1978, p.214, Appendix G, IV). The Uniform Curriculum is divided into three major areas with supervised practical experience required in each area:

1. Scripture
  - a. English Bible
  - b. Biblical languages
    - Hebrew
    - Greek
  - c. Methods and Interpretation
  - d. Supervised Practical Experiences
2. Doctrine
  - a. Church History
  - b. Apologetics
  - c. Theology and Ethics
  - d. Presbyterian Church Polity
  - e. Supervised Practical Experiences
3. Practical Theology
  - a. Pastor's personal life
  - b. Worship
  - c. Evangelism
  - d. Missiology
  - e. Pastoral Care
  - f. Christian Education

- g. Pastoral Administration
- h. Supervised Practical Experiences

Typically a two-year M.A. program has only one biblical language or neither biblical language, is deficient in Practical Theology, and has little or no supervised practical experience. Since an M.A. program is a two-year rather than a three-year program, it may cover some of the same areas of an M.Div. program but may not be to the same depth or extent.

There are three models to satisfy ordination requirements:

1. The three-year M.Div. program plus one-year internship (Three plus One Model) is the preferred program but there are alternatives.
2. One alternative is the Two Years of academic training in an extension seminary or Distance Learning program plus two years of tutorial training in Practical Theology and Supervised Practical Experiences under the supervision of Presbytery (Two Extension plus Two Serving Model). CTS and RTS both now offer two-year accredited M.A. degrees via Distance Learning.
3. A third alternative is the two years of residential study in an approved seminary (usually for an M.A. or M.T.S. degree) plus two years of tutorial training in Practical Theology and Supervised Practical Experiences under the supervision of Presbytery (Two Seminary plus Two Tutorial Model).

It should be noted that if either of the Two plus Two Models are used, the Presbytery must follow “a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America” that satisfies the content and Supervised Practical Experiences of the Uniform Curriculum.

Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, “The Rules of Assembly Operation,” “The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission,” and/or *Robert’s Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA are of an advisory nature and are not authoritative rulings that may only be made by the courts of the Church. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not give legal advice. When legal advice is needed, professional legal counsel should be secured from one familiar with applicable laws and regulations.

## **Extraordinary Clause for Ordination, BCO 21-4**

### **L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk Emeritus PCA**

The *Book of Church Order* uses the term “ordinarily” to designate the usual procedure that is to be followed but allows for the courts of the Church to make exceptions to usual practices within the parameters of the PCA Constitution. One such instance is the so-called “extraordinary clause” for ordination of ministers (BCO 21-4) regarding the educational requirements for ordination.

One of the results of the Reformation was that Reformed, Lutheran, and Anglican Churches expected their ministers to be educationally prepared for ministry. This is reflected in our *BCO* educational requirements for ordination. The usual preparation for ministry is a college education followed by a three-year divinity program.

Prior to the mid-1960s, the first degree in divinity was called a Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.), just as the first degree in law was called a Bachelor of Laws (LLB). After the 1960s, the nomenclature was changed from B.D. to Master of Divinity (M.Div.). The standard law degree became Juris Doctor (J.D.).

In earlier times one could be tutored for ministry by a minister, or attend a theological seminary. Prospective lawyers could “read law” under an attorney or go to law school in preparation for the law exam. Our *BCO* educational requirements for ministry (BCO 21-4) may be completed in the traditional formal education, having “a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved college or university, and also a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved theological seminary, or by “authentic testimonials of having completed a regular course of theological studies, or a certificate of completion of and endorsement from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America.”

The *Book of Church Order* specifies that a candidate for the PCA ministry is to submit himself to the care and guidance of the presbytery in his course of study and of practical training to prepare himself for ministry (BCO 18-1, 18-4). The *BCO* does not state the seminary a candidate must or may attend, though *BCO* 21-4 speaks of an “approved theological seminary” as one of several requirements for ordination. The only seminary owned and operated by the General Assembly of the PCA is Covenant Theological Seminary. Historically, the three seminaries that have provided the greatest number ministers for the PCA are Covenant, Reformed, and Westminster seminaries. A review of *the PCA Yearbook, Ministerial Directory* will reveal that Presbyteries have accepted ministers and candidates for ordination from numerous other seminaries, not just Covenant, Reformed and Westminster. Approving a candidate’s choice of a seminary to attend or accepting candidate’s M.Div. from any seminary is a discretionary decision of a Presbytery.

In order to assist Presbyteries, the Six General Assembly approved a curriculum (*BCO* 21-4 b., see *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 1978, p.214, Appendix G, IV). ). The Uniform Curriculum is divided into three major areas (Scripture, Doctrine, and Practical Theology) with supervised practical experience required in each area.

With the growth of two-year M.A. programs among seminaries, a question arises whether a two-year M.A. degree from a theological seminary meets the ordination requirements set forth in the *BCO*. If an M.A. is the *only* theological education the candidate has had, and the M.A. has not been supplemented by some program of instruction to cover all of the requirements of the curriculum approved by the General Assembly, then the M.A. alone would not meet the educational requirements because a two-year M.A. degree does not meet the requirements of “a certificate of completion of and endorsement from a

theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America”.

The General Assembly has spoken to the issue of the proper use of the extraordinary clause.

- In 1976 Tennessee Valley Presbytery asked for an interpretation of the extraordinary clause. The Committee on Judicial Business (later renamed the Committee on Constitutional Business) opined, “The Committee gives the following opinion that each Presbytery has the right and the responsibility to interpret the “Extraordinary Clause” for itself and its action in no way binds the action of any other Presbytery” (*Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> General Assembly*, 1976, p. 72).
- In 1981 the General Assembly adopted the Committee on Judicial Business’ recommendation that “The General Assembly recognizes that the use of the extraordinary clause is left to the discretion of an individual Presbytery subject to the review of the General Assembly and to the process provided for in a complaint. The General Assembly declares that the use of the extraordinary clause should be limited to the extraordinary circumstances of the church or the proven extraordinary gifts of the man. The Assembly would take notice, however, that there has been an increasing laxity in the application of the clause. The Assembly would, therefore, counsel that Presbyteries exercise diligence and care in the use of this provision in order that they not prevent the ordination of a candidate for whom there are truly exceptional circumstances not ordain a person who is inadequately prepared for the ministry” (*M9GA*, 1981, p.122).

#### **Proper Use of the Extraordinary Clause**

- In the discretion of the Presbytery, there are extraordinary circumstances in the church that wishes to call the candidate (*BCO* 21-4 h.), or also there are proven extraordinary gifts (*BCO* 21-4 g., h.) exhibited by the candidate and ascertained by the Presbytery.
- If the Presbytery omits any of the educational requirements, it may only do so by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote and the reason(s) for the omission(s) must be recorded in the minutes (*BCO* 21-4 a.).
- If the Presbytery omits any of the areas of the parts of the trials for ordination, it may only do so by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote (*BCO* 21-4 c.) and the reason(s) for the omission(s) must be recorded in the minutes (*BCO* 21-4 d.).

The Office of the Stated Clerk may give advice and counsel regarding constitutional and procedural matters. Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, “The Rules of Assembly Operation,” “The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission,” and/or *Robert’s Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA or staff members of the Office of the Stated Clerk are for information only, however, and are not authoritative rulings that may only be made by the courts of the Church. Responses to inquiries are based on information supplied by the inquirer, which may not necessarily be comprehensive. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not represent parties in ecclesiastical judicial cases and may not prepare judicial cases for parties. Parties to potential cases or cases in process are responsible for their own constitutional and procedural knowledge and understanding. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not give legal advice. When legal advice is needed, professional legal counsel should be secured from one familiar with applicable laws and regulations.

**Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains  
and Military Personnel (PRCC):  
Presbytery/Classis Checklist**

**Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCC):  
Presbytery/Classis Checklist**

Member churches of the PRCC denominations or Presbyteries/Classis (see list below) may have men who seek a pastoral call as a chaplain. Chaplain positions can be in a military or civilian setting and can be full-time or part-time.

A Call to chaplain ministry IS an acceptable call for ordination.

It is also important to know that the PRCC is designated by each member denomination as the ONLY authorized source of ecclesiastical endorsement to any chaplaincy position (military and civilian) within all PRCC denominations.

This checklist is intended to cover the critical steps necessary for one to become a chaplain. But, if YOUR question(s) are not covered below, please contact one of the following PRCC representatives:

- For all general chaplain endorsing questions and all Military Chaplain positions and seminary students who want to become Chaplain Candidates, contact James R. Carter, the only authorized Endorser for Chaplains of all types within PRCC denominations and presbyteries/classis: Email: [jcarter@pcanet.org](mailto:jcarter@pcanet.org) / Phone: 954-850-2448 / Fax: 678-825-1252
- For specific questions about Civilian Chaplain positions (including VA) and TEs enrolling in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) programs, contact Michael Stewart: Email: [mstewart@pcanet.org](mailto:mstewart@pcanet.org) / Phone: 706-329-3600

1. \_\_\_ Review PRCC Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), found on the PRCC website, <https://resources.pcamna.org/resource/chaplain-presbytery-resources/>

Presbyteries: Please send questions that are not answered on this list to: [ChaplainMinistries@pcanet.org](mailto:ChaplainMinistries@pcanet.org). We will always be updating this FAQ list with your help and input.

2. \_\_\_ Ensure all normal ordination steps are covered in the man's request to serve as a chaplain. Be sure to ascertain whether he has the gifts to serve in a non-parish, pluralistic setting.

3. \_\_\_ Ensure the man has a written Call for ordination or ordination transfer purposes, i.e., a military "Endorsement/Defense Department Form 2088" or a job description/offer or endorsement from a civilian or governmental institution. The PRCC can provide the Presbytery with a Call Letter to Chaplain Ministry, if needed.

4. \_\_\_ Men who are being ordained to the Military and Civilian Chaplaincy are ordinarily ordained as Evangelists to allow them to perform the Sacraments. This is to be renewed annually per PCA BCO 8-6.

5. \_\_\_\_ Ensure the man has applied for an endorsement through the PRCC application process. This is mandatory for those whose ministry requires an endorsement (For those men whose chaplain ministry does not require an endorsement, the presbytery, as part of its oversight duties, should encourage the man to request an endorsement from the PRCC).

6. \_\_\_\_ Ensure the PRCC Endorser has received an email from the Stated Clerk of Presbytery declaring the man to be “in good standing” or (in the case of a Chaplain Candidate) “under care” in the presbytery. The Armed Forces Chaplain Board requires every Chaplain Candidate Applicant to have approval by the Applicant’s Denominational Endorser on a Defense Department 2088 Ecclesiastical Endorsement Form.

7. \_\_\_\_ Ensure Military Chaplain Candidates are in an “under care” status (a military service seminary program in which the student becomes a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant or Ensign (depending on his service branch) while he trains with and explores the military chaplaincy). All Chaplain Candidates must be approved by the PRCC.

PRCC Denominations: Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC), Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), The United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA), Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC), Korean Presbyterian Church in America – Koshin (KPCA)

## The PCA Logo

In 2016, the 44<sup>th</sup> General Assembly approved for the first time a logo for the Presbyterian Church in America. The logo is available for use<sup>1</sup> by PCA churches, presbyteries, and General Assembly-level ministries.

To better assist those using the logo, we offer a PCA Logo Standards Guide. Any use of the PCA logo must be in keeping with the instructions included in this guide.

The PCA Logo Standards Guide and logo files are available for download on the Administrative Committee's website here:

<http://www.pcaac.org/pca-logo/>

Please encourage your presbytery's churches and ministries to use the logo as they are able. If any questions arise, please contact [ac@pcanet.org](mailto:ac@pcanet.org), or call the Administrative Committee at 678-825-1000.



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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: An official ministry of the Presbyterian Church in America is defined as a General Assembly-level committee or agency, a PCA presbytery, a PCA particularized or mission church. Other ministries or organizations – including those approved for advertising or exhibiting with the PCA General Assembly – wishing to use the PCA logo in any form must first receive express written consent by the Office of the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church in America. Please refer these requests to [ac@pcanet.org](mailto:ac@pcanet.org).