

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.