INCORPORATION OF PCA PRESBYTERIES

SUMMARY

The Stated Clerk's Office strongly recommends incorporating. The legal protections afforded by incorporation are significant. 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 presbytery, not a cumbersome nuisance. Once a corporation has been formed, the presbytery should see that annual reports are filed and that other corporate formalities are observed to preserve the benefits corporate status can provide to the presbytery.

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I. INCORPORATION IN GENERAL

Incorporation is the registering of a legal entity with the State. A corporation is the resulting legal entity that separates the organization's assets and income from its members. In terms of the Church, incorporation is the legal recognition by the State of a previously existing independent entity encompassing church life and activities.

Incorporation of a presbytery is an optional procedure. The presbytery's exemption from federal income tax or state sales tax is the same whether the church is an unincorporated association or a legally incorporated entity. The formation of a corporation by a presbytery may be viewed as 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 presbytery is located.

II. ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES OF INCORPORATION

There are both advantages and disadvantages from forming a corporation. The Report of the Church/State Subcommittee of the General Assembly identified six advantages to incorporation: (1) limitation of personal liability, (2) litigation in the corporate name, (3) convenience in holding property, (4) availability of financing, (5) limitation of charitable trust regulation, and (6) better protection of the organizational name.[1]

While most of the advantages are more relevant for individual churches as opposed to a presbytery, the first two are worth noting for presbyteries.[2]

(1) *Limitation of personal liability*: Incorporation effectively creates a protective bubble of limited liability, often called a corporate veil, around a corporation's members and officers. Members and officers are shielded from personal liability and their financial assets are legally separated from the presbytery's. Without incorporation, every member of the presbytery potentially may be held personally liable for any claim on the presbytery. This means that every teaching elder and church in the presbytery may be personally liable for any suit against the presbytery and their personal assets (homes, church buildings, bank accounts, retirement accounts, etc.) are at risk.

(2) *Litigation in the corporate name*: An incorporated presbytery is ordinarily sued in its corporate name, whereas an unincorporated presbytery must be sued in the names of all its members—thus, every teaching elder and church in presbytery would be a named party to the suit.

[1] Attorney Wendell R. Bird, quoted in "Report of the Church/State Subcommittee of the General Assembly" (*M15GA*, Appendix Q, 444f.). The report may be found in *M15GA*, 15-91, III.C.32 & 33, p. 191 and Appendix Q, p. 429 and online at https://pcahistory.org/pca/digest/index.html.

[2] A discussion of all the advantages in the context of a local church may be found in "081-A Incorporation Information — Churches."

The disadvantages noted by the Church/State Subcommittee are (1) expenses and formalities of corporations, and (2) constitutional protections and governmental regulations for corporations.

(1) *Expenses and formalities of corporations*: Incorporation involves filing and legal costs, sometimes annual filings to maintain corporate status, and observance of corporate formalities. However, presbyteries that do not incorporate should pursue professional legal documents for either a charitable trust or an unincorporated association, which also incurs costs.

(2) *Governmental regulations for corporations and potential limitations on constitutional protections*: Though incorporation is sometimes thought to either reduce constitutional protections enjoyed by religious organizations or bring greater governmental regulation, neither is the case. A fuller discussion of this issue may be found in the Report of the Church/State Subcommittee.[3]

III. INCORPORATION PROCEDURE

A. Decision to Incorporate

The decision to incorporate would be made by the presbytery.

B. Articles of Incorporation

The presbytery 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 presbytery. A local attorney can modify the sample document to meet state requirements and local custom and assist in registering the corporation with the state.

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. 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 presbytery is located.

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 to be left to *The Book of Church Order* and action by the presbytery.

[3] *M15GA*, 15-91, III.C.32 & 33, p. 191 and Appendix Q, p. 429 and online at https://pcahistory.org/pca/digest/index.html.

IV. 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

Where compatible with state law, it is recommended that the Executive Committee or Administrative Committee (whatever presbytery calls the committee that organizes and coordinates affairs for the presbytery) serve as the Board of Trustees. When it becomes necessary to handle a corporate matter (such as bank accounts), the committee can adjourn its meeting and then call to order a meeting of the Board of Trustees, with the same men simply "changing hats."

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.

B. Officers of the Corporation

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 moderator, (2) Vice President(s) —the vice-moderator and/or moderator-elect, (3) Secretary—the Stated Clerk of presbytery, and (4) Treasurer—the presbytery treasurer. This arrangement allows having corporate officers serve *ex officio*, keeping the corporation in the background as a tool that is used only when needed. The sample Bylaws give specific responsibilities to the 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 in keeping with the provisions of the *BCO* that specify the appropriate duties and authorities of each group.

C. Corporate Minutes

Minutes of the meetings of the Board of Trustees and the presbytery (when corporate matters are brought before the presbytery as a whole) should be kept in a corporate minute book. Such a book is sometimes 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 non-profit corporation 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.

INCORPORATION
Exhibit A-I

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF

ABC PRESBYTERY, INC.
A NONPROFIT CORPORATION

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of the corporation is ABC PRESBYTERY, 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 Presbytery. 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 ABC Presbytery, 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 presbytery should develop its own statement of purpose, which may be as brief or as long as desired. The following purpose #1-2 is given as an example.]

1. To prayerfully facilitate the healthy expansion of the Kingdom of God in our region through
    a. recruiting, examining, and encouraging pastors and evangelists,
    b. planting healthy churches and promoting consideration of the gospel by all around us, and

c. guarding the churches through loving biblical oversight and discipline of ministers and churches under our authority; and

2. To provide a necessary link between the churches and ministers in this region and the Church beyond our borders through
   a. participating in the higher courts of the Church and attending to their lawful directives,
   b. proposing to the General Assembly such recommendations for the health and growth of the Church as might be to the glory of Christ, and
   c. seeking to be blessed by and to be a blessing to the Church at large by the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. 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 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. 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_____ 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. The members of the corporation shall be those duly ordained Teaching Elders (Ministers) admitted into membership of ABC Presbytery, and those Ruling Elders representing local congregations, which congregations are affiliated with

the Presbyterian Church in America and within the bounds of ABC Presbytery who have been designated or commissioned to attend the next meeting of ABC Presbytery. Such individuals shall be the members of the corporation until the next meeting of the ABC Presbytery at which time the members of the Corporation shall be those individuals designated or commissioned as hereinabove set forth to attend such meeting of the presbytery. 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.

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)(I)(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 be approved by two-thirds vote of the Board of Trustees of ABC Presbytery 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 Board of Trustees, the membership of ABC Presbytery 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 membership of ABC Presbytery.

Section 2. Liquidation. Upon dissolution of the corporation, the Board of Trustees shall pay or 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.

INCORPORATION
Exhibit A – 4

ARTICLE X. INITIAL OFFICE AND AGENT

Section 1. Office. The initial registered office of the corporation shall be _____,. Anytown,_____ County, _____ 00000.

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
ABC PRESBYTERY, INC.

We the members of ABC PRESBYTERY, 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/Moderator. . . . . ._____
(2) Secretary/Stated Clerk. . . . . _____
(3) Treasurer/Treasurer . . . . . ._____

INCORPORATION
Exhibit B-2

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 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.

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 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

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 Semi-nary 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

- 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
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- 4. Officers
  - 4-1. Moderator and Vice-Moderator
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  - 4-4. Treasurer
  - 4-5. Parliamentarian
  - 4-6. Trustees
- 5. Committees and Commissions
  - 5-1. Standing Committees
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  - 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
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- 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

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 being 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.
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  > > 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