

Handbook for Presbytery Clerks



2026

Prepared by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
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DUE DATES

For forms and materials for the 53rd General Assembly, June 23-26, 2026

December 1, 2025	<input type="checkbox"/> PRESBYTERY ROLLS verify pastoral relationships and appointments to offices/committees of presbyteries.
February 16, 2026	<input type="checkbox"/> STATISTICAL INFORMATION from churches
February 23, 2026	<input type="checkbox"/> NOMINATIONS for permanent committees and agencies, special committees and the SJC (RAO 8-4.e) (Forms 059, 060) <input type="checkbox"/> REPORT OF APPOINTEES to Review of Presbytery Records (RPR) Committee and Nominating Committee (Form 053)
March 16, 2026	<input type="checkbox"/> PRESBYTERY MINUTES AND <i>RESPONSES TO EXCEPTIONS</i> (RAO 16-4, 16-7, 16-10)
April 24, 2026	<input type="checkbox"/> Matters (including OVERTURES) needing reference to the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB), i.e. PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE <i>BCO</i> (RAO 11-6). <input type="checkbox"/> Report of appointees to COMMITTEES OF COMMISSIONERS
May 23, 2026	<input type="checkbox"/> Final deadline for OVERTURES (not needing CCB review) to be considered by the General Assembly (RAO 11-8)

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DENOMINATIONAL MEETING SCHEDULE PRESBYTERIES

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

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

Ascension Presbytery: Last Saturday of January, April, July; first Saturday of November

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

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

Canada West Presbytery: First Friday (and Saturday, if necessary) of March and October (except when this falls on Thanksgiving weekend, then it is the following weekend)

Catawba Valley: Fourth Saturday of January; third Saturday of May; fourth Saturday of September

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

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

Central Georgia Presbytery: Friday and Saturday of the fourth Saturday of January; second Tuesday of May and September

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

Chesapeake Presbytery: Third Saturday of January; second Tuesday of March, May, and September; second Saturday of November

Chicago Metro Presbytery: Third Wednesday of February, May, August, and November

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

Eastern Canada Presbytery: February, June, and October

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

Eastern Pennsylvania Presbytery: Second or third Saturday of February and September, and the second or third Tuesday of April and November

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

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

Georgia Foothills Presbytery: Saturday after MLK Day in January; third Tuesday of April and September

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

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

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

Gulfstream Presbytery: Second Tuesday of February, May, August, and November

Heartland Presbytery: First Saturday of February; Last Saturday and the preceding Friday of April and September

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

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

Hills and Plains: Even numbered years: the second Saturday of February, the second Tuesday of May and October
Odd numbered years: the second Saturday of February, the first Saturday of May, the second Tuesday of October

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

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

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

James River Presbytery: Third Saturday of January; second Saturday of April; third Thursday of July; second Saturday of October

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

Korean Central Presbytery: Second Tuesday of April and October

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

Korean Northeastern Presbytery: Second Tuesday of March and September

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

Korean Southeastern Presbytery: the Monday of the first week of April and October

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nashville Presbytery: Second Tuesday of February, last Tuesday of April, and the second Tuesday of August and November

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

New River Presbytery: First Saturday of March, August, and November

New York State Presbytery: the last Saturday of January and April, and the last Friday/Saturday of September

North Florida Presbytery: Second Saturday of February, and the second Thursday of May and November

North Texas Presbytery: First Friday and Saturday of February, May, and November; second Friday and Saturday of August

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

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

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

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

Ohio Presbytery: first Saturday of February, May, and October

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

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

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

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

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

Philadelphia Presbytery: Third Saturday of January, March, May, and September; with an Edification meeting (shepherding, non-business) on the second Thursday of November.

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

Piedmont Triad Presbytery: First Saturday of February; second Thursday of May; second Saturday of August; second Thursday of November

Pittsburgh Presbytery: Last Saturday of January; first Saturday of April (unless the following day is Easter, then it will be the second Saturday); fourth Saturday of July; third Saturday of October

Platte Valley Presbytery: First Saturday of February, last Saturday of April; the second Saturday of August, and a Saturday in in the Fall to be recommended by the Coordinating Team, considering first the period from mid- October to mid-November

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

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

Rio Grande Presbytery: Fourth week of January, April, and September

Rocky Mountain Presbytery: Fourth Thursday of January and April; first Thursday of October.

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

Siouxlands Presbytery: Fourth Friday-Saturday of January; fourth Thursday-Friday of April and September

South Coast Presbytery: Fourth Tuesday and Wednesday of January, April, and September

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

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

Southeast Alabama Presbytery: Fourth Tuesday of January, April, July, and October

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

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

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

Suncoast Florida Presbytery: Second Tuesday of February, May, and September

Susquehanna Valley Presbytery: Third Saturday of February, May, and November; next to last Tuesday of September; if the February meeting falls on President's Day weekend, the meeting is the second Saturday

Tennessee Valley Presbytery: Second Saturday of February and May; second Tuesday of August; and the first Tuesday in November.

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

Warrior Presbytery: Fourth Tuesday of January (even years), the fourth Saturday of January (odd years); third Saturday of April; third Tuesday of October

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

Westminster Presbytery: Second Saturday of March, August, and November

Wisconsin Presbytery: Fourth Saturday of January, April, July, and October

ASSEMBLY-LEVEL MEETINGS

Administrative Committee

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

Committee on Discipleship Ministries

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

Covenant College

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

Covenant Theological Seminary

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

Geneva Benefits

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

Mission to North America

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

Mission to the World

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

PCA Foundation

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

Reformed University Fellowship

First Tuesday in October and second Tuesday in March

Ridge Haven

Fourth Monday and Tuesday of January

OTHER PCA COMMITTEES & AGENCIES

Cooperative Ministries Committee

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

Committee on Constitutional Business

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

Interchurch Relations Committee

As needed

Nominating Committee

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

PCA Historical Center Oversight Committee

Last Saturday of January and July

Review of Presbytery Records

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

Standing Judicial Commission

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

Theological Examining Committee

As needed

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

Third Tuesday thru Thursday of November

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

First or Second Thursday and Friday of November

Committee/Agency Coordinators Meeting

Meeting quarterly as can be arranged

Presbytery Stated Clerks Conference

First Friday and Saturday of December

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

ON BEING A CLERK OF PRESBYTERY

By Rev. James A. Smith

Dedicatory

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

Forward

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

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

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

OUTLINE

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

I. A Different Perspective

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

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

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

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

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

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

II. Sources for Guidance

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

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

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

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

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

B. *The Rules of Assembly Operations (RAO)*

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

C. *The Clerks Handbook*

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

D. Presbytery Standing Rules

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

E. Clerks Conference

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

III. Presbytery Duties

A. Keeping Minutes

1. General Concerns

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

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

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

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

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

2. Style

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

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

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

B. Maintaining Files

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

C. Correspondence

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

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

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

The Presbyterian concern for orderly and businesslike process requires a good deal of correspondence. Timely handling of it is not only good business, it is just plain thoughtfulness. It is easy to see the need for the initial sending of information, but the one receiving this contact may forget that, often, he must respond before the transaction can be considered complete. When transferring credentials the transfer is really not effected until the receiving Presbytery acts and then notifies the dismissing body.

The telephone is a wonderful device, and so quick! We must remember that we do not know when proof will be needed either for our own well-being or in case of judicial process, so good correspondence practices are wise.

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

In the PCA, convenient forms are provided for handling the transfers of ministers and the communication of the information to the clerk of the General Assembly.

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

Presbytery meetings almost always generate a good deal of business that requires the clerk to write letters. Promptness in attending to these duties may seem onerous but, as with all duties, it is almost always best. It is helpful to keep a list of such items as the meeting progresses and then check them off as they are completed. The order in which they are tended to will depend on their urgency.

D. Direction of Presbytery

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

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

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

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

IV. GA Responsibilities

A. Liaison with General Assembly

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

1. Clerks Handbook

We previously pointed out the Clerks Handbook as a source of help. It is in the required functions that the Handbook is most helpful, in fact, necessary. The functions of the church require that Presbytery provide information and manpower to the General Assembly. Thus, the clerk of Presbytery needs to be sure that he is aware of the specific areas and their timeframes so that Presbytery will not fall short on its responsibilities. Included here are elections of (and/or appointments to) nominees for permanent committees and agencies, representatives on Committees of Commissioners, Review of Presbytery Records (RPR) Committee and Nominating Committee. The Clerks Handbook lays out the schedules for all of these requirements and gives other helpful material as well. Thus it is obvious that it must be one of the clerk's main tools in planning for the meetings of Presbytery and staying up on all his duties.

2. Changes

When ministers transfer, are ordained or demitted, when churches are formed or dissolved (missions also), when addresses change, the clerk of Presbytery must notify the office of the Stated Clerk of General Assembly.

3. Annual Reports

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

B. Minutes for Review

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

V. Afterward

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

One major area where a right understanding of this attitude may alleviate or help one avoid unnecessary pain or frustration is in the matter of the review of Presbytery's minutes. It is clear that you will determine their "flavor" or style to a large extent, but the actions are not yours, they are entirely Presbytery's. It is Presbytery that approves the minutes, thereby taking full responsibility for them. Any later criticism, as in the review process, should therefore not be taken personally. And the required response must be from Presbytery, not the clerk. You answer, not to the RPR Committee of GA, but to the Presbytery. If the cause of the criticism is your fault, plead your case in the lower court and let Presbytery handle its responsibilities, whatever the failures may be, before the higher court. It is true that this will take place through your offices, but always remember, you are only the agent of Presbytery.

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

PCACLERKS ONLINE TOOLS

An Email Group has been set up for use by PCAPresbytery Clerks, Presbytery Recording Clerks, the PCA Stated Clerk's Office and other select individuals (i.e., past clerks). Members of the group are able to seek input and advice from the entire group with one email.

To subscribe, send a blank email to:

pcaclerks+subscribe@groups.io

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

pcaclerks@groups.io

If you would like to learn more or see previous discussions, please visit:

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

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

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

To access the Presbytery Portal:

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

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

Email hharrison@pcanet.org

Forms and Clerks Handbook Available Online

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

<https://www.pcaac.org/resources/presbyteries/presbytery-clerks-download-page/>

CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF PRESBYTERIES

<u>Presbytery</u>	<u>Date Organized</u>	<u>Notations</u>
Vanguard	September 7, 1972	Merged into TN Valley, 4/8/77
1. Warrior	February 13, 1973	
2. Gulf Coast	April 10, 1973	
3. Westminster	April 10, 1973	
4. Central Georgia	May 30, 1973	
5. North Georgia Metro Atlanta	June 2, 1973 10/17/06	Divided to form Metro Atlanta (retains #5), Northwest Georgia 10/17/06, Georgia Foothills 1/1/07
6. South Florida	June 4, 1973	Divided by formation of Gulfstream, 01/01/05
7. Covenant	June 18, 1973	
8. Calvary	July 1, 1973	Divided by formation of Palmetto, 1/1/84, and Fellowship, 7/1/94
9. Grace	July 17, 1973	
10. Mississippi Valley	July 19, 1973	
11. Texas North Texas	July 31, 1973	Divided to form North Texas (retains #11) and South Texas, 1/1/85
12. Evangel	August 5, 1973	Formed from Texas Presbytery
13. Mid-Atlantic James River	October 30, 1973	Divided by formation of Philadelphia 9/19/80; Dissolved at Joining & Receiving to form Delmarva and James River, 6/14/82
	June 14, 1982	Formed from Mid-Atlantic; Divided by formation of Blue Ridge, 9/14/02; Divided by formation of Tidewater, 1/1/14
14. Tennessee Valley	January 15, 1974	Divided by formation of Nashville, 7/9/94
15. Carolina 10/28/78. Western Carolina Highlands	February 16, 1974	Divided to form Western Carolina (retains #15), Central Carolina and Eastern Carolina,
16. Pacific	October 28, 1978	Formed from Carolina Name changed, 4/20
	February 26, 1974	Divided by formation of Southwest, 7/18/1980, South Coast, 9/29/89, and Northern California, 10/27/89
17. New River	June 22, 1974	Divided by formation of Blue Ridge, 9/14/02
18. Louisiana	February 7, 1975	Divided by formation of Southeast Louisiana, 2/31/92; Dissolved 6/21/12 by merging into Covenant, Mississippi Valley, North Texas, and SE Louisiana
19. Ascension	July 29, 1975	Divided by formation of Pittsburgh, 1/1/93; Divided by redrawing of New York State, 7/1/02
20. Central Florida	October 15, 1977	
21. Central Carolina	October 28, 1978	Formed by division of Carolina
22. Eastern Carolina	October 28, 1978	Formed by division of Carolina
23. Southwest Arizona	July 18, 1980	Formed from Pacific Presbytery; Divided to form Arizona (retains #23) and Rio Grande, 1/1/18
	January 1, 2018	Formed from Southwest Presbytery
24. Philadelphia	September 19, 1980	Formed from Mid-Atlantic
25. Siouxlands	June 15, 1981	

<u>Presbytery</u>	<u>Date Organized</u>	<u>Notations</u>
26. Delmarva	June 14, 1982	Formed from Mid-Atlantic at Joining & Receiving Divided to form Heritage (retains #26) and Potomac, 1/1/90
Heritage	January 1, 1990	Formed from Delmarva
27. Eastern Canada	June 14, 1982	Added by Joining & Receiving
28. Great Lakes	June 14, 1982	Added by Joining & Receiving
29. Illiana	June 14, 1982	Added by Joining & Receiving
30. New Jersey	June 14, 1982	Added by Joining & Receiving
31. Northeast	June 14, 1982	Added by Joining & Receiving Divided to form Northern New England (retains #31), Southern New England, and New York State 9/15/2000
Northern New England	September 15, 2000	Formed from Northeast
32. Oklahoma	June 14, 1982	Added by Joining & Receiving
Mid-America		Name changed, 1987 Dissolved & merged into North Texas, 7/1/2001
33. Pacific Northwest	June 14, 1982	Added by Joining & Receiving Divided to form Western Canada, 1/1/06
34. Missouri	June 14, 1982	Added by Joining & Receiving as St. Louis renamed Missouri, 1984
35. Northern Illinois	June 17, 1982	Divided to form Chicago Metro, Wisconsin 7/1/2005
36. Korean Eastern	June 17, 1982	
37. Korean Southwest	June 17, 1983	
38. Palmetto	January 1, 1984	Formed from Calvary; Divided by formation of Fellowship, 07/01/04, Lowcountry and Pee Dee, 1/1/2016
39. South Texas	January 1, 1985	Formed from Texas
40. Southeast Alabama	January 1, 1985	
41. Korean Central	June 25, 1986	
42. Korean Southeastern	June 25, 1986	
43. Susquehanna Valley	January 1, 1987	
44. Korean Southern	June 8, 1988	Formed from Korean Southwest
45. Heartland	January 1, 1989	Divided by formation of Iowa, 1/1/02, Platte Valley, 11/1/07
46. South Coast	September 29, 1989	Formed from Pacific
47. Northern California	October 27, 1989	Formed from Pacific
48. Potomac of	January 1, 1990	Formed from Delmarva; Divided by formation Chesapeake, 1/1/02, and Blue Ridge, 9/14/02 Divided by formation of Suncoast Florida,
49. Southwest Florida 7/1/04	July 1, 1990	
50. Rocky Mountain	September 1, 1991	Formed from Southwest
51. Korean Capital	October 5, 1992	
52. Korean Northwest	October 13, 1992	
53. Southeast Louisiana Southern Louisiana	December 31, 1992	Formed from Louisiana Name changed, 2014
54. Pittsburgh	January 1, 1993	Formed from Ascension
55. Fellowship	July 1, 1994	Formed from Palmetto
56. Nashville	July 9, 1994	Formed from Tennessee Valley
57. Metropolitan New York	July 16, 1997	Formed from Northeast and New Jersey

<u>Presbytery</u>	<u>Date Organized</u>	<u>Notations</u>
58. North Florida	October 17, 1998	
59. New York State	September 15, 2000	Formed from Northeast
60. Southern New England	September 15, 2000	Formed from Northeast
61. Piedmont Triad	July 1, 2001	Formed from Central Carolina
62. Ohio Valley	July 1, 2001	Formed from Great Lakes
63. Chesapeake	January 1, 2002	Formed from Potomac
64. Iowa	January 1, 2002	Formed from Heartland
65. Blue Ridge	September 14, 2002	Formed from James River and Potomac
66. Houston Metro	January 1, 2004	Formed from South Texas
67. Savannah River	January 1, 2004	Formed from Central Georgia
68. Suncoast Florida	July 1, 2004	Formed from Southwest Florida
69. Gulfstream	January 1, 2005	Formed from Southern Florida
70. Chicago Metro	July 1, 2005	Formed from Northern Illinois
71. Wisconsin	July 1, 2005	Formed from Northern Illinois
72. Western Canada Canada West	January 1, 2006	Formed from Pacific Northwest; name changed, 2018
73. Eastern Pennsylvania	January 1, 2006	Formed from Philadelphia
74. Philadelphia Metro West	January 1, 2006	Formed from Philadelphia
75. Northwest Georgia	October 17, 2006	Formed from North Georgia
76. Georgia Foothills	January 1, 2007	Formed from North Georgia
77. Platte Valley	November 1, 2007	Formed from Heartland
78. Providence	January 1, 2009	Formed from Evangel
79. Ohio	January 1, 2010	Formed from Great Lakes and Ascension
80. Central Indiana	July 1, 2010	Formed from Ohio Valley
81. Catawba Valley	July 1, 2011	Formed from Central Carolina and Western Carolina
82. Korean Northeastern	February 7, 2012	Formed from Korean Eastern
83. Tidewater	January 1, 2014	Formed from James River
84. Korean SW Orange County	June 20, 2014	Formed from Korean Southwest
85. PeeDee	January 1, 2015	Formed from Palmetto
86. Lowcountry	January 1, 2015	Formed from Palmetto
87. Columbus Metro	August 1, 2016	Formed from Ohio Dissolved - merged into Ohio Valley in 2024
88. Hills and Plains	July 1, 2017	Formed from North Texas and Covenant
89. Rio Grande	January 1, 2018	Formed from Southwest with one county added from North Texas
90. West Hudson	January 1, 2019	Formed out of Metropolitan New York and New Jersey

NOTE: As of January 1, 2025, there were 87 presbyteries. Mid-America (#32) was dissolved in 1982. Louisiana (#18) was dissolved in 2012. Columbus Metro (#87) was dissolved in 2024.

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

PRESBYTERY BOUNDARIES

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

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

Arizona (23)

The entire state of Arizona.

Ascension Presbytery (19)

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

Blue Ridge Presbytery (65)

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

Calvary Presbytery (8)

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

Canada West Presbytery (72)

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

Catawba Valley Presbytery (81)

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

Central Carolina Presbytery (21)

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

Central Florida Presbytery (20)

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

Central Georgia Presbytery (4)

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

Central Indiana Presbytery (80)

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

Chesapeake Presbytery (63)

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

Chicago Metro Presbytery (70)

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

Columbus Metro Presbytery (87)

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

Covenant Presbytery (7)

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

Eastern Canada Presbytery (27)

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

Eastern Carolina Presbytery (22)

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

Eastern Pennsylvania Presbytery (73)

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

Evangel Presbytery (12)

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

Fellowship Presbytery (55)

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

Georgia Foothills Presbytery (76)

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

Grace Presbytery (9)

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

Great Lakes Presbytery (28)

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

Gulf Coast Presbytery (2)

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

Gulfstream Presbytery (69)

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

Heartland Presbytery (45)

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

Heritage Presbytery (26)

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

Highlands Presbytery (formerly Western Carolina) (15)

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

Hills and Plains

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

Houston Metro Presbytery (66)

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

Illiana Presbytery (29)

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

Iowa Presbytery (64)

All of the state of Iowa except Pottawattamie County.

James River Presbytery (13)

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

Korean Capital Presbytery (51)

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

Korean Central Presbytery (41)

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

Korean Eastern Presbytery (36)

All of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

Korean Northeastern Presbytery (82)

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

Korean Northwest Presbytery (52)

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

Korean Southeastern Presbytery (42)

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

Korean Southern Presbytery (44)

All of Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas.

Korean Southwest Presbytery (37)

The California counties of Inyo, Kern, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, and San Bernadino; and the states of Colorado and Nevada.

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

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

Lowcountry Presbytery (86)

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

Metro Atlanta Presbytery (5)

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

Metropolitan New York Presbytery (57)

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

Mississippi Valley Presbytery (10)

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

Missouri Presbytery (34)

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

Nashville Presbytery (56)

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

New Jersey Presbytery (30)

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

New River Presbytery (17)

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

New York State Presbytery (59)

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

North Florida Presbytery (58)

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

North Texas Presbytery (11)

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

Northern California Presbytery (47)

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

Northern Illinois Presbytery (35)

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

Northern New England Presbytery (31)

All of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Northwest Georgia Presbytery (75)

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

Ohio Presbytery (79)

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

Ohio Valley Presbytery (62)

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

Pacific Presbytery (16)

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

Pacific Northwest Presbytery (33)

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

Palmetto Presbytery (38)

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

Pee Dee Presbytery (85)

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

Philadelphia Presbytery (24)

The city of Philadelphia, Cheltenham and Abington Townships in Montgomery County.

Philadelphia Metro West Presbytery (74)

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

Piedmont Triad Presbytery (61)

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

Pittsburgh Presbytery (54)

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

Platte Valley Presbytery (77)

The state of Nebraska and Pottawattamie County, Iowa.

Potomac Presbytery (48)

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

Providence Presbytery (78)

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

Rio Grande Presbytery (89)

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

Rocky Mountain Presbytery (50)

The states of Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana.

Savannah River Presbytery (67)

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

Siouxlands Presbytery (25)

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

South Coast Presbytery (46)

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

South Florida Presbytery (6)

The Florida counties of Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe; and the Cayman Islands.

South Texas Presbytery (39)

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

Southeast Alabama Presbytery (40)

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

Southern Louisiana Presbytery (53)

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

Southern New England Presbytery (60)

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

Southwest Florida Presbytery (49)

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

Suncoast Florida Presbytery (68)

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

Susquehanna Valley Presbytery (43)

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

Tennessee Valley Presbytery (14)

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

Tidewater Presbytery (83)

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

Warrior Presbytery (1)

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

West Hudson (90)

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

Westminster Presbytery (3)

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

Wisconsin Presbytery (71)

All counties within the state limits of Wisconsin.

GUIDELINES FOR DIVIDING PRESBYTERIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

General Guidelines for Dividing Presbyteries:

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

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

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

Counting the Cost: Time, Talent, and Treasure.

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

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

Procedures for Division

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

AGREEMENT ON TRANSFER OF MEMBERS AND CONGREGATIONS

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

1. Regular Transfer of Membership
 That in the regular transfer of membership between NAPARC churches, the session/consistory or presbytery/classis not receive a member until the appropriate document of transfer is in the hands of the receiving church.

2. Transfer with Irregularities
 - a. That upon request for transfer of membership by a person under discipline, the sending session/consistory or presbytery/classis inform the receiving body of the nature and extent of the disciplinary procedure before implementing the requested transfer, thus enabling informal consultation between the pastors and elders of both churches.
 - b. That such a person not be received officially until the judicatory/assembly of the receiving church has taken into serious account the discipline of and the information supplied by the sending church.
 - c. That a “fugitive from discipline” who no longer is a member of a church or who is no longer on the roll of a presbytery shall not be received until the former judicatory/assembly has been contacted to determine if proper restitution has been made and/or reconciliation has been attempted.

3. Recourse and Appeal
 When communication or action regarding the sending/receiving of a member or ordained officer/office bearer does not satisfy either the dismissing or receiving judicatory/assembly, communication may be submitted to the interchurch relations committees of the denominations involved with a view to mediation of the problem. If this proves unsatisfactory, the session/consistory or presbytery/classis may register its concern to the appropriate judicatory/assembly of the denomination.

4. Congregational Transfer
 That a congregation seeking to leave a NAPARC church to become affiliated with another NAPARC denomination be received only after it has complied with the requirements of the form of government of the church from which it is separating, and the receiving church shall be responsible to see that this is done.

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

INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

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

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

The PCA's Ecclesiastical Relations

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

Fraternal Relations

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

The PCA presently has Fraternal Relations with:

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

Corresponding Relations

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

The PCA presently has Corresponding Relations with:

- Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC)
- Reformed Church of South Africa
- Presbyterian Church of Japan
- The Free Church of Scotland
- The Presbyterian Church in Korea (Hapdong)
- The Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea
- The Presbyterian Church of Australia
- Nongo u Kristu u i Ser u sha Tar (NKST) - Nigeria

We have had what amounts to “corresponding relations” with the Reformed Episcopal Church from early in the 1970s. The REC commended the PCA at its founding. Since the REC was one of six denominations founding the Anglican Church in North America in 2009, sometimes the ACNA ecumenical representative to our Assembly has been an REC minister or their presiding bishop and sometimes he has been from ACNA at large. The Church of England and the Reformed Church of

Hungary originated as Reformed Churches but maintained episcopal polity rather than Presbyterian polity. Part of the delegation to the Synod of Dort included an Anglican bishop, George Carleton on Llandaff, and two future bishops, Joseph Hall and John Davenant.

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

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

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

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

PCA Membership in Other Organizations

The PCA is a member of:

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

NAPARC Denominations

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

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

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

NAPARC Member Denominations

- ARPC** – Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church- www.arpchurch.org
- CanRC** – Canadian and American Reformed Churches - www.canrc.org
- ERQ** – Eglise Reformee du Quebec (aka – The Reformed Church of Quebec (RCQ)) - www.erq.qc.ca
- FRCNA** – Free Reformed Churches of North America - www.frcna.org
- HRC** – Heritage Reformed Congregations - heritagereformed.com
- KAPC** – Korean-American Presbyterian Church - www.kapc.org
- KPCA** – Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin)
- OPC** – Orthodox Presbyterian Church – www.opc.org
- PCA** – Presbyterian Church in America – www.pcanet.org
- PresRC** – Presbyterian Reformed Church – presbyterianreformed.org
- RCUS** – Reformed Church in the US – www.rcus.org
- RPCNA** – Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America - reformedpresbyterian.org
- URCNA** – United Reformed Churches in North America - www.urna.org

REGARDING AFFILIATION WITH THE PCA

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

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

Sample letter from Presbytery:

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

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

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

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

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

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

The minister shall then say:

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

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

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

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

RECORDS MANAGEMENT GUIDE

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

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

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

Examples of types of records could include:

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

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

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

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

Frequency of Use - this section helps make retention decisions

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

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

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

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

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

PCA RECORDS MANAGEMENT FORM

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

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

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

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

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

SUGGESTED RETENTION SCHEDULE

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

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

ADVERTISING

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

CORPORATE

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

INSURANCE & PERSONNEL

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

LEGAL

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

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

PLANT & PROPERTY

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

PURCHASING

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

SALES & MARKETING

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

TAXATION

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



GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING INFORMATION

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

Form 025

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

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

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

RPR MATERIALS

RAO 16-4.a states:

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

So you should now send in your materials either:

-4 hard copies

-or-

-2 hard copies and 1 digital copy

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

For instructions on how to submit digital records, please email Alyssa Cho, acho@pcanet.org

OTHER INFORMATION TO BE SUBMITTED

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

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



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

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

Response to Exception Form –Please type your response using the specific pdf form for your presbytery and upload the form using the ShareFile link in the presbytery portal, or email the form back to acho@pcanet.org by March 15, 2026.

Your Presbytery's Exceptions – a report of the Presbytery's minutes is sent to your Presbytery, made by the RPR Committee. This report is commonly referred to as the 'Clerk's Report'. If you have not received your report, please contact Alyssa Cho at acho@pcanet.org. The Clerk's Reports are divided into Form, Substance, and Notation.

- Form is marked with F, following the ID number, e.g. 2025-01F
- Substance does not have a letter, just the ID Number, e.g. 2025-01
- Notation is marked with N, following the ID Number, e.g. 2025-01N

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

Submission guidelines for the review of minutes, standing rules and directories:

- Minutes must be received in the Stated Clerk's Office by March 15, 2026.
 - You now have two options to submit your minutes for review:
 - four bound, paginated hard-copies or
 - two bound, paginated hard-copies and one paginated digital copy. If you choose this option, please see subsequent information for your digital file.
- Directories must include (see RAO 16-4.c):
 - (1) all teaching elders with their addresses and status, and all churches and missions with contact information and clerk of session
 - (2) all officers and regular committee members
 - (3) all candidates under care, interns, and licentiates with their addresses and status.
- Standing Rules for the presbytery

All required physical and digital documents must be received by March 15, 2026.



REVIEW OF PRESBYTERY RECORDS (RPR) REPORT

Thank you for your faithful service as stated clerk of your presbytery. Please find attached information pertaining to the review of your presbytery's **2024** minutes from the **52nd** General Assembly. Please refer to RAO 16-6c, 16-7, and 16-10 for a definition of RPR findings, an overview of RPR reporting, and guidelines for your response.

The following items were emailed to you:

- The Clerk's Report

- This contains a detailed report **specific** to your particular presbytery, listing exceptions of form, exceptions of substance, notations, and whether responses to previous exceptions were found satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Many of you will be familiar with this document.
- We have continued to use exception ID numbers, which we hope will make communication between you and the committee clearer.
- You will notice exceptions of form have an "**F**" at the end of the ID and notations have an "**N**". This is to help differentiate them from exceptions of substance as we have moved to a more automated system to produce our report.

- The PDF Response Form

- It is already populated with the **exceptions of substance to which your presbytery needs to respond**. This includes both new exceptions as well as exceptions whose responses were found **unsatisfactory**.
- Any response from a previous year's exception that has been ruled **Unsatisfactory** must have a new response.
- Your presbytery needs to respond to exceptions of **substance only** (see RAO 16-10).
- RAO 16-10.a. explains that Presbytery should normally adopt responses in the same calendar year as the Assembly took the exceptions. If not adopted in the calendar year, the presbytery should supply a copy of the minutes in which responses were approved.

Please fill in the specific presbytery's **PDF Response Form** that was provided and upload the form using the ShareFile link in the upper right corner of the presbytery portal or email the form to: acho@pcanet.org **by March 15, 2026**.

If you have any questions about these documents or other matters related to the work of the RPR Committee, please feel free to contact the RPR Chairman Stephen Tipton, stipton12@gmail.com.

If you have specific questions about filling out and submitting the PDF response document, you can send those inquiries to the RPR Secretary Thomas Rickard, thomas.rickard@sevenspringspresbyterian.com.

The RPR Committee is slated to meet **May 28-30, 2026**.

Thank you for your efforts to advance the Kingdom of God through your service to your presbytery. Should you have any questions, please contact Alyssa Cho at acho@pcanet.org or 678-825-1000.

To access the **BCO** and **RAO** online, please refer to <https://www.pcaac.org/>



DIRECTORY AND ROLLS FOR PRESBYTERY USE

The Presbytery Stated Clerk should keep several rolls. Updates to these rolls should be reported to the Office of the Stated Clerk as soon as possible. **The Presbytery Portal is the most efficient place to track, change, and report minister and church status.**

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

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

BCO 5-4."The temporary government shall receive members (*BCO* 12-5.a) into the mission church according to the provisions of *BCO* 57 so far as they may be applicable. As members of the mission church those received are communing or non-communing members of the Presbyterian Church in America..."

BCO 5-6."Mission churches and their members shall have the right of judicial process to the court having oversight of their temporary governing body."

BCO 5-7."Mission churches shall maintain a roll of communicant and non-communicant members, in the same manner as, but separate from, other particular churches."

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

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



PRESBYTERY ENROLLMENT REPORT FORM FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2025

PRESBYTERY _____ Date _____

Stated Clerk of Presbytery _____
(Name) (Phone)

Address _____

City, ST, Zip _____

1. Churches/Missions added to the Presbytery roll during 2025:
(Please indicate if newly organized, received, or new Mission)

Name, address and phone number of Church: _____

Date received: _____ Source: _____
Minister _____

Name, address and phone number of Church: _____

Date received: _____ Source: _____
Minister _____

Name, address and phone number of Church: _____

Date received: _____ Source: _____
Minister _____

Name, address and phone number of Church: _____

Date received: _____ Source: _____
Minister _____

Name, address and phone number of Church: _____

Date received: _____ Source: _____
Minister _____

2. Churches lost from Presbytery roll during 2025:

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

3. Ministers added to Presbytery roll in 2025:

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

4. Ministers removed from Presbytery roll during 2025:

Name	Date Removed	Why removed - to where, if transferred

5. Candidates under care of the Presbytery as of December 31, 2025:

Name	Address
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____

6. Licentiates of the Presbytery as of December 31, 2025:

Name	Address
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____

(Use additional pages, if necessary)



MINISTERIAL BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Information for our records, some of which will be published in the Ministerial Directory of the *Yearbook* of the Presbyterian Church in America. (We will not publish personal information such as date of birth and children's names.) Please fill out this form as completely as possible. If additional space is needed, use additional pages. Please type or print plainly.

NAME _____

Last

First

Middle

ADDRESS _____

Street

City

State

Zip

PRESBYTERY MEMBERSHIP _____ PHONE# _____

PLACE OF BIRTH _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

FATHER'S NAME _____

MOTHER'S FULL MAIDEN NAME _____

WIFE'S FULL MAIDEN NAME _____

PLACE OF MARRIAGE _____ DATE OF MARRIAGE _____

DIVORCED: yes____no____; Please also give information on any former wives:

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

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

Give names of seminaries attended, dates and degrees earned: _____

Honorary degrees, name of institution, date and degree: _____

LICENSURE Date: _____ By Whom: _____

ORDINATION Date: _____ By Whom: _____

MINISTERIAL SERVICE (give title, place and dates): _____

OTHER _____

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

Email: records@pcanet.org



APPLICATION FOR CANDIDATES TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY
Presbyterian Church in America

THE PRESBYTERY OF _____

(please print or type your answers)

I. PERSONAL HISTORY

1. Name _____ Telephone _____

2. Present Address _____
(street)

_____ (city) _____ (state) _____ (zip)

3. Birth date ____/____/____ Place _____ Age _____

4. Your baptism: infant? ____ other? ____ by which church? _____

5. Where is your church membership? _____

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

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

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

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

9. Employment record (list last two employers)

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

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

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

II. PERSONAL INFORMATION:

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

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

Applicant's Signature _____

Date _____

MAIL THIS FORM TO:

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

This is to certify that _____ was received as a candidate

on _____, by the Presbytery of _____

Chairman's signature _____



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

Presbyterian Church in America

IN THE PRESBYTERY OF _____

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

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Other comments:

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

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

Signature of Moderator of the Session _____

Date _____



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

Signature of Reference _____

Date _____

Please return this form to this address: _____



**DIARY OF A CANDIDATE
COMMITTEE ON CANDIDATES**

Presbyterian Church in America

THE PRESBYTERY OF _____

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

NAME _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

SCHOOL ADDRESS _____

HOME CHURCH _____

RECEIVED BY PRESBYTERY _____

TRANSFERRED / ORDAINED _____

(Various contacts by the Committee should be noted.)

Date	Diary

**REPORT FOR MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES**

(To be filled out once a year by candidates)

Name _____ Age _____

Summer address _____

Permanent address _____

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

Degrees held / institutions granting _____

School attending _____ Class _____

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

Work _____

If not in school, do you plan to return to theological studies? _____ Where? _____

If not working, do you have plans to work? If so, what are those plans? _____

Are you receiving the minutes of Presbytery? _____

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

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

Where do you attend public worship? _____ regularly? _____

Describe your pattern of private devotions _____

Do you have family devotions on a regular basis? _____

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



MINISTERIAL OBLIGATION (see BCO 13-7)

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

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

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

Promising subjection to my brethren in the Lord; and

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

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

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

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

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Work: _____

Date ordained: _____

By whom: _____

CERTIFICATE OF LICENSURE

This form available on parchment through:

PCA Bookstore
1700 N. Brown Road, Ste. 102
Lawrenceville, GA 30043
1-800-283-1357
www.pcabookstore.com

See other side for form.

Certificate of Licensure

At _____, the _____ day of _____, A.D. _____,

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



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Moderator _____

Stated Clerk _____

CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION

This form available on parchment through:

PCA Bookstore
1700 N. Brown Road, Ste. 102
Lawrenceville, GA 30043
1-800-283-1357
www.pcabookstore.com

See other side for form.

Certificate of Ordination

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



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

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

Teaching Elder

(MINISTER OF THE WORD)

at _____ by the Presbytery of _____

on the _____ day of _____ in the year of our Lord _____.

Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Moderator of Presbytery

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

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

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

***Definite work to
which called:*** _____

Call issued by: _____
(church, agency for specific ministry)

The Call to a Particular Ministry

This form is available on parchment through:

PCA Bookstore
1700 N. Brown Road, Ste. 102
Lawrenceville, GA 30043
1-800-283-1357
www.pcabookstore.com

See other side for form.

The Call to a Particular Ministry

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

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

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

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

(Moderator of the Meeting)

Certificate of Honorable Retirement

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

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



Certificate of Honorable Retirement

This Is to Certify

That the Reverend _____

Is a member in good standing in the

Presbytery of _____

Of the Presbyterian Church in America,

And is now being designated honorably retired.

Done in Presbytery on this _____ *of* _____ *, A.D.* _____

Attest: _____

_____ *Presbytery*

CERTIFICATE OF DISMISSION

See other side for form.

Certificate of Dismission of a Minister



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

THIS IS TO CERTIFY

that the Reverend _____

IS A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING IN THE

Presbytery of _____

Presbyterian Church in America

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

Presbytery of _____

TO WHICH HE IS HEREBY RECOMMENDED

Done in Presbytery on this _____ *of* _____, *A.D.* _____

Attest: _____

_____ *Presbytery*

Certificate of Reception

This is to certify that the Reverend _____

was received by the Presbytery of _____

in session at _____

on _____ *A.D.* _____.

Stated Clerk of Presbytery

PRESBYTERIAL DISMISSAL OF A CANDIDATE

This form available on parchment through:

PCA Bookstore
1700 N. Brown Road, Ste. 102
Lawrenceville, GA 30043
1-800-283-1357
www.cepbookstore.com

See other side for form.

Presbyterial Dismissal of a Candidate

This is to certify

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



Attest: _____

Stated Clerk of _____ Presbytery

Done in Presbytery this _____ day of _____, A.D. _____



FORMS OF CALL

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

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

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

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

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

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

Moderator of the Meeting

Also helpful when issuing a call is BCO Appendix J:

APPENDIX J

SAMPLE FORM FOR TERMS OF CALL

_____(Church Name)_____ (PCA) being on sufficient grounds well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you, _____(Minister's Name)_____, and having good hopes from our knowledge of your labors that your ministrations in the Gospel will be profitable to our special interests, do earnestly call you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. That you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to provide you with the following salary, benefits, vacations, and leaves of absence.

Salary and Housing Allowances _____ basis
(weekly, monthly, etc.)

Gross Salary, which includes housing allowance \$ _____
Amount Designated as Housing Allowance* \$ _____

Benefits

Primary Benefits

Healthcare and Medicare Supplement Insurance/Allowance \$ _____
Retirement Savings** -amount equal to _____ % of salary + housing \$ _____
Long Term Disability Insurance – replaces _____ % of salary + housing \$ _____
Life Insurance – amount equal to _____ times salary + housing \$ _____
Social Security/Medicare Allowance \$ _____
Equity Allowance for ministers who are living in a manse \$ _____
Leadership Counseling/Coaching \$ _____

Secondary Benefits

Dental \$ _____
Vision \$ _____
HSA (Health Savings Account)*** \$ _____

Total Benefits \$ _____

Temporary Benefits

Relocation expenses will be reimbursed but shall not exceed the following \$ _____
Other \$ _____

Temporary Benefits Total \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNTS \$ _____

Vacations and Leaves of Absence

Vacation _____ Days Holiday Leave _____ Days
Paid Sick Leave _____ Days Paternity Leave _____ Days
Bereavement _____ Days Educational Leave _____ Days
Sabbatical Leave _____ Days, after _____ years

Attestation

I, having moderated the congregational meeting which extended a call to _____(Minister's Name)_____ for his ministerial services, do certify that the call has been made in all respects according to the rules laid down in the Book of Church Order, and that the persons who signed the call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.

Clerk of Session:
Signature: _____
Print Name: _____
Date: _____

Minister-Elect:
Signature: _____
Print Name: _____
Date: _____

Send a copy to each of the following: 1) Minister-Elect 2) Stated clerk of the Presbytery

*Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code allows a minister to exclude a housing allowance from their taxable salary for eligible housing related expenses (i.e., mortgage payment, rent payments, utilities, etc.). It is important to note that the housing allowance is excludable for income tax purposes only (e.g., federal, and most states). It is not excludable for Self-Employment tax purposes (i.e., SECA) which are paid into the Social Security and Medicare system.

A minister's total cash salary can be broken down into two parts: 1) Taxable Salary and 2) Housing Allowance (Partially Taxable Salary).

Minister's Salary

Taxable Salary	Housing Allowance (Partially Taxable Salary)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxable for Self-Employment Tax purposes Taxable for Federal Income Tax purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxable only for Self-Employment Tax purposes

** There is an annual limit on the amount of total contributions (i.e., employee and employer contributions) that can be made to a 403(b) plan. This limit is referred to as the 415(c) limit. However, it is important to note that a minister's housing allowance cannot be included as part of includible compensation because it is not a component of a minister's gross income (1.425-2(d) of income tax regulations). This limit may reduce the amount that can be contributed to a retirement account even though the call package guidelines formula includes it (i.e., retirement contributions are a percentage of salary and housing allowance).

*** Health Savings Account requires a high deductible health savings account eligible plan.

CERTIFICATION CARDS

This form available on printed cards through:

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

See other side for form.

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



THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE

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

PRESBYTERY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN
AMERICA.

Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Date

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



THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE

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

PRESBYTERY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN
AMERICA.

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

PRESBYTERY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN
AMERICA.

Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Date

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



VERIFICATION OF ORDINATION AND LETTERS OF GOOD STANDING

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

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

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

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

September 30, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

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

Sincerely,

XXXXXXX
Stated Clerk of Metro Atlanta Presbytery
Presbyterian Church in America

September 30, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

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

Sincerely,

John Bise
Provisional Stated Clerk
Presbyterian Church in America



CHECKLIST FOR CANDIDATE COMING UNDER CARE OF PRESBYTERY

Name: _____

Church Membership: _____

Any extraordinary circumstances: _____

Examination by: _____

- ☐ Endorsements received and read
- ☐ Experiential religion
- ☐ Motives for seeking the ministry
- ☐ Examination arrested
- ☐ Examination sustained
- ☐ Motion to receive candidate
- ☐ Presbytery mentor approved

Name of Mentor: _____

- ☐ Questions asked by the Moderator (BCO 18-3) and answered affirmatively

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

☐ Charge by: _____

☐ Prayer by: _____



CHECKLIST FOR LICENSURE

Name: _____

Committee Recommendation: _____

Examination by: _____

- ☐ Sermon presented in written form to the committee, orally presented to the
 - Presbytery and approved by the Presbytery
- ☐ Statement of Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel
- ☐ Basic knowledge of Bible doctrine as outlined in the Confession of Faith and
 - Catechisms of the PCA
- ☐ Practical knowledge of the English Bible
- ☐ Basic knowledge of the government of the PCA as outlined in the BCO
- ☐ Stated differences with Westminster Confession and Catechisms (BCO 19-2; RAO 16-3, e., 5) – record stated differences in their own words and the action of Presbytery on each stated difference): _____
- ☐ Parts of Examination Sustained
- ☐ Examination sustained as a Whole and proceed to License
- ☐ Questions (BCO 19-3) asked and answered affirmatively
 1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
 2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scripture?
 3. Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the Church?
 4. Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this Presbytery, or of any other into the bounds of which you may be called?
- ☐ Prayer by the Moderator
- ☐ Charge by the Moderator:

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



CHECKLIST FOR INTERNSHIP

Name : _____

Church Membership: _____

Steps to enrolling a Candidate as an Intern:

- ☐ Candidate under care of Presbytery (may be licentiate, but not necessarily)
- ☐ Written and/or oral statement of inward call to ministry
- ☐ Internship program presented and approved
- ☐ Prayer by the Moderator
- ☐ Charge by the Moderator (BCO 19-10):

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



CHECKLIST FOR ORDINATION

See BCO 21-4

Name: _____

Committee Recommendation: _____

Preliminary Checklist:

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

Examination by: _____

Minutes are to list all areas of the examination (RAO 16-3.e.5)

- ☐ Christian Experience
RAO 16-3.e.6 requires a specific statement in the minutes that BCO 21-4.e was met
- ☐ Knowledge of Greek and Hebrew (by exam or seminary degree)
- ☐ Bible Content
- ☐ Theology
- ☐ Sacraments
- ☐ Church History and History of the PCA
- ☐ Principles and Rules of Government and Discipline of PCA
- ☐ Differences with Westminster Confession, and Catechisms
RAO 16-3.e.7 requires that stated differences be recorded in the candidate's own words
- ☐ Use of Extraordinary Clause, stating unusual circumstances, reasons for omission(s), part(s) omitted, and $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote (BCO 21-4): _____
- ☐ If US ordinand intends to opt out of Social Security, certification that he has biblically conscientious objections to Social Security (IRS Form 4361).
- ☐ Differences judged according the categories of RAO 16-3.e.7
- ☐ Examination sustained as a whole
- ☐ Motion to receive into Presbytery
- ☐ Signing of his Ministerial Obligation (BCO 13-7)

Approval of the Call

- ☐ Call presented to Presbytery
- ☐ Call found in order
- ☐ Call placed in hands of candidate
- ☐ Candidate indicates desire to accept call
- ☐ Appointment of Commission to Ordain and Install (Quorum 2+2)

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



CHECKLIST FOR RECEPTION FROM ANOTHER PRESBYTERY IN THE PCA

See BCO 13-6 and 20-9

Name: _____

Committee Recommendation: _____

Preliminary Checklist:

- ☐ Written credentials from dismissing Presbytery

Examination by: _____

Minutes are to list all areas of the examination (RAO 16-3.e.5)

- ☐ Christian Experience, including BCO 21-4.e
RAO 16-3.e.6 requires a specific statement in the minutes that BCO 21-4.e was met
- ☐ Theology
- ☐ Sacraments
- ☐ Church Government
- ☐ Differences with the Confession of Faith and Catechisms (BCO 21-4 & RAO 16-3.e.7)
RAO 16-3.e.7 requires that the stated differences be recorded in the TE's own words

- ☐ Differences judged according the categories of RAO 16-3.e.7
- ☐ Examination sustained as a whole
- ☐ Motion to receive into Presbytery
- ☐ Signing of his Ministerial Obligation (BCO 13-7)
- ☐ If TE is not received, a statement of the rationale for this action adopted, placed in the minutes, and communicated to the dismissing Presbytery (BCO 13-6.a)

Approval of the Call

- ☐ Ordinarily (BCO 13-5), a written call or letter certifying a call from a congregation or appropriate body: _____
- ☐ Call found in order, including the specific arrangements (RAO 16-3.e.8)
- ☐ Call placed in hands of minister
- ☐ Minister indicates desire to accept call
- ☐ Appointment of Commission to Install (quorum 2+2)

TE _____

RE _____

TE _____

RE _____

TE _____

RE _____



CHECKLIST FOR RECEPTION OF MINISTER FROM ANOTHER DENOMINATION

See BCO 13-6 and 21-4

Name: _____

Committee Recommendation: _____

Preliminary Checklist:

- ☐ Written credentials from dismissing denomination
- ☐ Written call or letter certifying call from congregation or appropriate body: _____
- ☐ College diploma
- ☐ Seminary diploma
- ☐ Sermon preached before Presbytery
- ☐ Sermon approved by Presbytery

Examination by: _____

Minutes are to list all areas of the examination (RAO 16-3.e.5)

- ☐ Christian Experience
RAO 16-3.e.6 requires a specific statement in the minutes that BCO 21-4.e was met
- ☐ Knowledge of Greek and Hebrew (by exam or seminary degree)
- ☐ Bible Content
- ☐ Theology
- ☐ Sacraments
- ☐ Church History and History of the PCA
- ☐ Principles and Rules of Government and Discipline of PCA
- ☐ Differences with *Westminster Confession*, and *Catechisms*
RAO 16-3.e.7 requires that stated differences be recorded in the candidate's own words
- ☐ Use of Extraordinary Clause, stating unusual circumstances, reasons for omission(s), part(s) omitted, and $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote (BCO 21-4): _____
- ☐ If US ordinand intends to opt out of Social Security, certification that he has biblically conscientious objections to Social Security (IRS Form 4361).
- ☐ Differences judged according the categories of RAO 16-3.e.7
- ☐ Examination sustained as a whole
- ☐ Motion to receive into Presbytery
- ☐ Answered the questions put to candidates at their ordination (BCO 13-6.b, 21-5)
- ☐ Signing of his Ministerial Obligation (BCO 13-7)

Approval of the Call

- ☐ Call presented to Presbytery
- ☐ Call found in order
- ☐ Call placed in hands of candidate
- ☐ Candidate indicates desire to accept call
- ☐ Appointment of Commission to Install (quorum 2+2)

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



CHECKLIST FOR RECEPTION OF A CHURCH FROM ANOTHER DENOMINATION

See BCO 13-8

Name: _____

Commission Recommendation: _____

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



REPORT OF COMMISSION TO ORDAIN & INSTALL

Report of the Commission to ordain and install Mr. _____
as Pastor of _____.

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

Commission members present were:

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

Others Present: _____

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

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

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

The Chairman propounded the constitutional questions to the Candidate (*BCO* 21-5) and
these were answered in the affirmative. The Chairman then propounded the constitutional
questions to the congregation¹/Session² (*BCO* 21-6), and these were answered in the
affirmative by the Members holding up their right hands. The Candidate then kneeled and
was set apart to the holy office of the Gospel Ministry with prayer and the laying on of
hands. He then rose and the Members of the Presbytery gave him the right hand of
fellowship. The Chairman then declared that Mr. _____ had
been regularly elected, ordained, and installed as Pastor of the Church.

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

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

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

Secretary

¹ For pastor or associate pastor

² For assistant pastor



REPORT OF COMMISSION TO INSTALL

Report of the Commission to install Rev. _____
as Pastor of _____.

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

Commission members present were:

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

Others Present: _____

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

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

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

The Chairman propounded the constitutional questions to the Minister (*BCO* 21-9) and
these were answered in the affirmative. The Chairman then propounded the constitutional
questions to the congregation¹/Session² (*BCO* 21-10), and these were answered in the
affirmative by the Members holding up their right hands. The Minister then kneeled and
was installed to the pastoral office with prayer and the laying on of hands. He then rose
and the Members of the Presbytery gave him the right hand of fellowship. The Chairman
then declared that Rev. _____ had been regularly elected
and installed as Pastor of the Church.

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

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

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

Secretary

¹ For pastor or associate pastor

² For assistant pastor



SAMPLE AGENDA FOR A ORDINATION AND/OR INSTALLATION COMMISSION

1. Call to Order by the Convener and Opening Prayer
2. Determination of a Quorum: at least two REs and two TEs (BCO 15-2)
3. Election of Chairman and Secretary
4. Review and approval of Worship Service
5. Reading and Approval of Minutes
6. Commission recessed until the time of the Worship Service
7. Worship Service (The BCO specifies the following to be included)
 - Commission reconvened with opening prayer of the Worship Service
 - Sermon (BCO 21-5)
 - Explanation of Proceedings (21-5)
 - Constitutional Questions
 - ordination: BCO 21-5 and 6; installation: BCO 21-9 and 10
 - Prayer of Ordination and/or Installation (BCO 21-7)
 - Right hand of fellowship by all members of Presbytery (BCO 21-7)
 - Declaration of Ordination and/or Installation (BCO 21-7)
 - Charge to Pastor (BCO 21-7)
 - Charge to the Congregation (BCO 21-7)
 - Prayer (BCO 21-7)
 - Hymn (BCO 21-7)
 - Benediction by newly ordained and/or installed Pastor (BCO 21-7)

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



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

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

The Commission convened on _____, 20____, at _____ am/pm, at the church (or at _____).

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

Teaching Elders: _____ (Chairman): _____

Ruling Elders: _____

Others present: _____

Secretary: _____

The following have been elected to the office of Ruling Elder and Deacon by the members of _____ Mission Church from the list of those found qualified by the Commission:

TE _____ has been elected as pastor by the communicant members of the _____ Mission Church.

The Commission recessed with prayer by _____ for the service of Organization (and Ordination/Installation of the Pastor).

A sermon was preached by TE _____ on the topic/text: _____

_____ (of the Commission) asked the members of the mission congregation the question for entering into church covenant contained in BCO 5-9i(3) which was answered affirmatively by the congregation with uplifted hands. _____ then declared that _____ Mission Church was constituted as a church in the PCA (BCO 5-9i(4)).

The Sermon having been heard during the Worship Service, the presiding minister, _____, stated the warrant and nature of the office of Ruling Elder and Deacon together with the proper character to be sustained and the duties to be fulfilled per BCO 24-5. The 6 questions in BCO 24-5 were addressed to the Ruling Elder candidates and each responded affirmatively to the questions. The question to the congregation in BCO 24-5 was made and they answered in the affirmative by holding up their right hands.

A Dedicatory Prayer was offered for _____ who had previously been ordained as Ruling Elders. The Candidates, _____

_____, then kneeled and were set apart with prayer and the laying on of hands to the office of Ruling Elder and Deacon. The new officers were then given the right hand of fellowship. The Minister then declared that _____

(names of all Ruling Elders and Deacons)

had been regularly elected, ordained and installed as Ruling Elders and Deacons of the church using the words of BCO 24-5. The Minister then addressed a charge to the Officers and to the church.

The Chairman led in the installation (ordination & installation of _____ as pastor of the newly established particular church. He stated briefly the previous proceedings of the Presbytery, and pointed out the nature and importance of the (ordination/installation) ordinance.

The Chairman propounded the constitutional questions (in BCO 21-5 for a Candidate, BCO 21-9 for a Minister, and BCO 21-11 for an Evangelist) to the Candidate/Minister and these were answered in the affirmative. The Chairman then propounded the constitutional questions (in BCO 21-6 or 21-10) to the congregation of the _____ Church and these were answered in the affirmative by members holding up their right hands. The Candidate/Minister then kneeled and was set apart to the holy office of the Gospel Ministry with prayer and the laying on of hands. He then rose and the Members of the Commission gave him the right hand of fellowship. The Chairman then declared that Mr./TE _____ had been regularly elected, (ordained,) and installed as Pastor of the Church, using the words of BCO 21-7.

A Charge to the Pastor was delivered by RE/TE _____.

A Charge to the Congregation was delivered by RE/TE _____.

Following prayer and singing, the new Pastor pronounced the benediction.

The Commission reconvened, approved its Minutes, and was adjourned with prayer by _____.

Date

Secretary of the Commission

Please submit the completed report to the Stated Clerk of Presbytery as soon as possible.



CHECKLIST FOR ESTABLISHING A MISSION CHURCH

I Establishing a Mission Church

- A. Petition to plant a mission church approved by presbytery (BCO 5-2).
- B. Presbytery provides a temporary system of government (BCO 5-3)
- C. Pastoral ministry provided by presbytery (BCO 5-4).
- D. Church members received by temporary government (BCO 5-5, 12-5a & 57)

II Steps to Organization of a Mission Church

- A. Temporary government determines there are men who appear to be qualified to serve as church officers.
- B. Potential church officers are identified, nominated, trained, and examined following the procedures in BCO 24.
- C. Election of Officers (Normally 2 weeks before the organization service.) BCO 5-9d.
- D. Election of a Pastor (See BCO 5-9f)
- E. Presbytery approves the membership petition to organize (BCO 5-9g).
- F. Presbytery appoints an organizing commission and sets the date and time of the organization service (BCO 5-9h).

II Organization Service (BCO 5-9i)

- A. Ordination and Installation of Officers.
- B. Ordination (if necessary) and installation of a Pastor.
- C. Membership Covenant (5-9i.(3))
- D. Declaration of Organization

BYLAWS OF THE SAMPLE PRESBYTERY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

ARTICLE I NAME AND PURPOSES

Section 1: Name

The incorporated name of this body shall be “The Sample Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America, Inc.” (the “Sample Presbytery”).¹

Section 2: Purpose

The purpose 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 (hereinafter *The Book of Church Order* or *BCO*).

Section 3: Authority

In carrying out such purpose, the Trustees (as defined below) and the Corporation shall be under the authority of the Presbytery and shall in all respects conform to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* preface, III). These Bylaws are not to conflict with the Constitution and the provisions of the Constitution shall control over any provisions of these Bylaws that may be in conflict therewith. These Bylaws shall further be determined and interpreted in a manner consistent with the Standing Rules of Sample Presbytery.

Section 4: Limitation of Powers and Duties

The powers and duties of the Corporation and its Trustees shall not infringe upon the powers and duties of the Presbytery as delineated in the *Book of Church Order*.

ARTICLE II MEMBERS

Section 1: Members

The members of the Corporation shall be those duly ordained Teaching Elders (Ministers) and churches within the bounds of Sample Presbytery as defined by the Presbyterian Church in America and accepted by it into membership in accordance with the *Book of Church Order*. Churches shall be represented by Ruling Elders as elected by their Session to represent the church

¹ State law typically requires use of “Incorporated,” “Inc.” “Corporation,” or “Corp.” in the name, such as “Sample Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America, Corp.”

at the next meeting of the Presbytery. Such individuals shall be members of the Corporation until the next meeting of the Presbytery.

ARTICLE III TRUSTEES

Section 1: Authority

The legal affairs of the Corporation, as distinguished from the ecclesiastical matters, shall be managed by the Board of Trustees, which shall have such powers and duties as are set forth in these Bylaws and the *Book of Church Order*.

Section 2: Qualification

The Board of Trustees shall consist of the members of the Executive Committee of Sample Presbytery as established pursuant to the Standing Rules of Sample Presbytery. Each Trustee shall hold office as a Trustee as long as he remains a member of the Executive Committee of Sample Presbytery.

Section 3: Subcommittees

The Board of Trustees may establish such subcommittees as may be deemed necessary or desirable and vest such subcommittees with such authority as may be deemed proper.

Section 4: Meetings

Meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called by the Chairman or by a majority of the Board. Written notice stating the place, date, and hour of the meeting shall be delivered by the Secretary at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the meeting. Such notice should specify the purpose of the meeting. A Trustee may waive such notice; and attendance at such meeting shall constitute a waiver of such notice.

Section 5: Electronic Meetings

The Board of Trustees, in its discretion, may for itself and its subordinate committees, adopt rules determining when videoconference or telecommunication arrangements may be used for meetings or attendance at meetings and regulating how meetings using telecommunications arrangements shall be conducted.

Section 6: Quorum

A majority of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum.

Section 7: Voting

Voting is per capita. There shall be no voting by proxy. The act of a majority of the Trustees present at a meeting at which there is a quorum shall be the act of the Board of Trustees except as may otherwise be specified by law, the Constitution, or these Bylaws.

ARTICLE IV OFFICERS

Section 1: Officers

The officers of the Corporation shall be the Chairman of the Board and President, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and such assistant secretaries and treasurers as may be deemed desirable by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees may elect assistant secretaries and treasurers. In the event that the Secretary or the Treasurer is unable to act, the Board of Trustees shall be authorized to appoint a provisional Secretary or a provisional Treasurer to serve until a regular Secretary or Treasurer may be elected by the Sample Presbytery.

Section 2: The Chairman

The Moderator of the Sample Presbytery shall serve as Chairman of the Board of Directors and as the President of the Corporation. The Chairman shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees. He shall sign such instruments as may be required and shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the Board of Trustees.

Section 3: The Secretary

The Stated Clerk of the Sample Presbytery shall serve as the Secretary of the Corporation. The Secretary shall have such duties and responsibilities as set forth in the *Book of Church Order* and the *Rules of Assembly Operations* for the Stated Clerk. The Secretary shall prepare and forward all notices required by law or by these Bylaws and shall have general charge of the corporate books and records. He shall sign such instruments as may be required and perform the duties incident to the office of Secretary, and such duties as may be assigned by the Board of Trustees or the members of the Corporation.

Section 4: The Treasurer

The Treasurer of the Sample Presbytery shall serve as the Treasurer of the Corporation. The Treasurer shall be the custodian of the funds and securities belonging to the Corporation. He shall receive, deposit and disburse such funds as directed by the Presbytery, including any provisions set forth in the *Book of Church Order*. He shall keep an accurate account of the finances of the Corporation and of the funds in his custody. He shall prepare, or have prepared, such reports of the financial condition of the Corporation as may be required, and, in general, perform all of the duties incident to the office of Treasurer.

Section 5: Powers and Duties

The officers of the Corporation shall respectively have such powers and perform such duties in the management of the property and affairs of the Corporation, subject to the control of the Trustees, as generally pertain to their respective offices, as well as such additional powers and duties as may from time to time be conferred by the Board of Trustees. No action taken by the officers shall impinge upon the authority of the Sample Presbytery and all such actions shall be in conformity with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America.

ARTICLE V FISCAL MATTERS

Section 1: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall be from January 1 to December 31 of each year.

ARTICLE VI AMENDMENTS

Section 1: Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of those present and voting at any two consecutive Stated Meetings of Sample Presbytery, having been proposed in writing, provided that any such amendments shall not conflict with the Constitution or Standing Rules..

ARTICLE VII DISSOLUTION

Section 1: Application and Distribution of Assets

Upon dissolution of the Corporation or winding up of its affairs, the assets of the Corporation shall be applied and distributed as follows:

- a) All liabilities and obligations of the Corporation shall be paid, satisfied and discharged or adequate provision shall be made therefor;
- b) Assets held by the Corporation upon condition requiring return, transfer or conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the dissolution or winding up, shall be returned, transferred or conveyed in accordance with such requirements; and
- c) All remaining assets not disposed of under paragraphs (a) or (b) shall be transferred or conveyed to such one or more of the following as the Trustees may select: (A) one or more entities organized and operated not for profit, exclusively for religious, charitable and educational purposes, that are exempt from federal income tax under Code section 501(c) and to which deductible contributions can be made under Code section 170; or (B) any particular church, Presbytery, Committee, or Agency of the Presbyterian Church in America which is exempt from federal income tax under Code section 501(c) and to which deductible contributions can be made under Code section 170.

ARTICLE VIII INDEMNIFICATION

Section 1: Indemnification

The Corporation shall, to the extent legally permissible, indemnify each person who may serve or who has served at any time as an officer, Trustee, or employee of the Corporation against all expenses and liabilities, including, without limitation, counsel fees, judgments, fines, excise taxes, penalties and settlement payments, reasonably incurred by or imposed upon such person in connection with any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding in which he or she may become involved by reason of his or her service in such capacity; provided that no indemnification shall be provided for any such person with respect to any matter as to which he or she shall have been finally adjudicated in any proceeding not to have acted in good faith in the reasonable belief that such action was in the best interests of the Corporation; and further provided that any compromise or settlement payment shall be approved by a majority vote of a quorum of directors who are not at that time parties to the proceeding.

The indemnification provided hereunder shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors and administrators of persons entitled to indemnification hereunder. The right of indemnification under this Article shall be in addition to and not exclusive of all other rights to which any person may be entitled.

No amendment or repeal of the provisions of this Article which adversely affects the right of an indemnified person under this Article shall apply to such person with respect to those acts or omissions which occurred at any time prior to such amendment or repeal, unless such amendment or repeal was voted by or was made with the written consent of such indemnified person.

This Article constitutes a contract between the Corporation and the indemnified officers, Trustees, and employees. No amendment or repeal of the provisions of this Article which adversely affects the right of an indemnified officer, Trustee, or employee under this Article shall apply to such officer, Trustee, or employee with respect to those acts or omissions which occurred at any time prior to such amendment or repeal.

STANDING RULES OF THE SAMPLE PRESBYTERY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

1. NAME AND COMPOSITION

1.1. Name

The name of this body shall be The Sample Presbytery (the “Presbytery”).

1.2. Composition

Membership in Sample Presbytery shall consist of all the Teaching Elders and Churches within its geographic bounds (as defined by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America) that have been accepted by Presbytery (*BCO* 13-1).

2. GOVERNMENT

2.1. The Constitution Defined

The Constitution of the Presbytery shall be the constitution of the PCA as defined in the *Book of Church Order (BCO)* Preface, III.

2.2. General Rules

Such rules for the Church courts as may be adopted and amended by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, together with these Standing Rules, shall govern the procedure of the Sample Presbytery.

2.3. Parliamentary Procedure

The rules contained in the current edition of *Roberts Rules of Order* shall be the parliamentary authority governing the Presbytery, provided they are not inconsistent with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America or any standing rules the Presbytery may adopt.

2.4. Suspension of Standing Rules

Any section of the Standing Rules other than Section 2.1 and Section 2.2 concerning Church courts may be suspended by two-thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting.

2.5. Amendments

Amendments to these Standing Rules other than Section 2.1 and Section 2.2 concerning Church courts may be made by two-thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting at two consecutive stated meetings.

3. MEETINGS

3.1. Stated Meetings

Presbytery shall hold four (4) stated meetings a year on the second Tuesday of February and August, and the third Saturday of May and November.

3.2. Adjourned Meetings

Adjourned meetings of stated meetings may be held as deemed necessary. Matters permissible for consideration shall be those that would have been permissible at the meeting of which this is an adjourned meeting.

3.3. Called Meetings

Special Called meetings shall be in accord with *BCO* 13-12.

3.4. Quorum

The quorum for all meetings shall be in accord with *BCO* 13-4.

3.5. 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 Sample Presbytery. All Sessions are expected to be represented at all meetings by duly appointed Ruling Elder(s) at all meetings of Presbytery.

When providentially hindered from attending, Teaching Elders and Sessions are expected to request Presbytery to excuse him, stating his reason for non-attendance. Requests for excusal shall be made through the Stated Clerk.

Valid reasons for excusal include:

1. Immediate need for pastoral care: illness, funeral, crisis counseling, and weddings.
2. Personal or family illness.
3. Business demands.
4. On Sabbatical.

3.6. Executive Session

When Presbytery enters executive session, all installed Ruling Elders of member Churches may remain seated for the session.

3.7. Electronic Meetings

- a. A stated or called meeting of the Presbytery may be conducted by electronic means only under extraordinary circumstances, as determined by the Executive Committee ("EC").
- b. Extraordinary circumstances are circumstances which would be very likely to prohibit the safe and/or legal travel to or from the meeting, and/or attendance at the meeting. These circumstances may include, but are not limited to, severe weather or severe health concerns from communicable diseases.
- c. Any electronic meeting shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules*.

- d. The following shall not be permitted by electronic conference: the examination or cross-examination of witnesses, the deliberation of guilt or innocence, or the deliberation of a censure in a case with process.
- e. The moderator shall ensure that the identity of all speakers is clear, and that all normal business may be conducted (including points of order, etc.).
- f. All deliberative bodies must be either electronic or in person. Mixed-format meetings are not permitted.
- g. Any meeting of a commission or committee may be conducted electronically in a manner consistent with the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules*.

4. OFFICERS

4.1. Moderator

A Moderator shall be elected annually at the November stated meeting for a term beginning at the next stated meeting and shall serve until his successor takes office. In the event he cannot fulfill his duties, the last person to serve as Moderator shall assume the position until the next stated meeting.

The Moderator shall serve in accordance with *BCO* 10-3 and has all the authority necessary for the preservation of order and for the proper and expeditious conduct of all business before the court according to the *Book of Church Order* and *Robert's Rules of Order*.

4.2. Stated Clerk

A Stated Clerk shall be elected by the Presbytery at the November meeting for a term of three years, beginning at the next stated meeting. He may succeed himself in future elections if so approved by the Presbytery. The responsibilities of the Stated Clerk shall be in accord with *BCO* 10-4, 13-10 and 11, and:

1. to maintain the rolls of the Presbytery
2. to take full and complete minutes of the proceedings of the Presbytery and to transcribe them in the permanent record of Presbytery after they are approved
3. to maintain a permanent record of the Standing Rules
4. to prepare a proposed docket for each meeting in cooperation with the Moderator
5. to distribute the call and proposed docket to the membership at least two weeks prior to the meeting
6. to receive all communications and refer them to the appropriate committees of Presbytery
7. to promptly communicate special orders of Presbytery
8. to sign and issue the official orders of Presbytery
9. to receive and process the annual statistics of Presbytery to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
10. to prepare a proposed annual budget for the Presbytery in cooperation with the Treasurer
11. to serve as Parliamentarian of Presbytery

4.3. Recording Clerk

A Recording Clerk shall be elected annually at the November meeting for a term beginning at the next stated meeting. He may succeed himself in future elections if so approved by the Presbytery.

The responsibilities of the Recording Clerk shall be to assist the Stated Clerk in recording and transcribing minutes and other mutually agreeable tasks.

4.4. Treasurer

A Treasurer shall be elected by the Presbytery at the November meeting for a term of three years, beginning at the next stated meeting. He may succeed himself in future elections if so approved by the Presbytery. The responsibilities of the Treasurer shall be:

1. to receive, record, and acknowledge all funds contributed to the Presbytery
2. to disburse funds at the direction of the Presbytery
3. to present a report of all receipts, expenditures and current assets of the Presbytery at each stated meeting
4. to present his books to Presbytery for audit annually
5. to work with the Stated Clerk to prepare a proposed annual budget for the Presbytery prior to the distribution of the call to the stated meeting in November

4.5. Trustees

The Trustees of the Presbytery shall be as defined in the Bylaws.

5. COMMITTEES

5.1. Permanent Committees

The permanent committees of the Presbytery are:

1. Executive Committee (EC)
2. Candidates, Credentials, and Interns Committee (CCI)
3. Mission to North America Committee (MNA)
4. Mission to the World Committee (MTW)
5. Committee on Review of Sessional Records (CRSR)
6. Shepherding Committee (SC)

5.2. Executive Committee (EC)

The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the Presbytery and is chaired by the Moderator. It exists for the purpose of handling the administrative duties of the Presbytery, including directing the Stated Clerk in the performance of his duties, assisting and advising the Moderator in the performance of his duties, and erecting ad-hoc committees as necessary for the work of Presbytery (including investigative committees under *BCO* 31-2).

5.3. Candidates, Credentials, and Interns Committee (CCI)

The Candidates, Credentials, and Interns Committee shall consist of three (3) Teaching Elders and three (3) Ruling Elders. Quorum shall be two (2) TEs and two (2) REs. The CCI Committee exists for the purpose of bringing all matters to presbytery related to candidates, ministerial credentials, and internships. These elders will serve three-year terms in three classes.

5.4. Mission to North America Committee (MNA)

The Mission to North America Committee shall consist of seven (7) Elders (Teaching or Ruling), The MNA Committee exists for the purpose of extending the Kingdom of God within the bounds

of the Sample Presbytery through 1) recruitment of church planters; 2) new church site development; 3) church revitalization; and 4) the development of college ministry.

5.5. Mission to the World Committee (MTW)

The Mission to the World Committee shall consist of three (3) Teaching Elders and three (3) Ruling Elders serving three-year terms in three classes. The MTW Committee exists for the purpose of bringing all matters to presbytery related to world missions.

5.6. Committee on Review of Sessional Records (CRSR)

The Committee on Review of Sessional Records shall consist of the Stated Clerk, the Recording Clerk, and four (4) additional Elders (Teaching or Ruling) serving three-year terms in three classes. The CRSR exists for the purpose of exercising general review and control through reviewing the records of all Sessions within Presbytery's bounds (*BCO* 40).

5.7. Shepherd Committee (SC)

The Shepherd Committee shall consist of three (3) Teaching Elders and three (3) Ruling Elders serving three-year terms in three classes. The SC exists for the purpose of providing pastoral care to all elders of presbytery and assist them in resolving interpersonal conflicts.

5.8. Membership

Unless otherwise stated, committee members serve three-year terms in three classes.

5.8. Quorum

Unless otherwise stated, a quorum of a committee shall consist of the majority of the members.

5.8. Electronic Meetings

Committee and Commission meetings may be held electronically or allow for electronic attendance. The following restrictions and provisions apply:

1. The technology for the meeting should at least allow for simultaneous communication but preferably allow for:
 - every participant to see and hear other
 - simultaneous aural communication
 - means of obtaining the floor
 - means for raising a point of order
 - means to vote
2. Parliamentary procedures for an electronic setting should be defined and communicated ahead of the meeting (e.g. voting procedure and how a participant shall seek the floor).
3. No action should be deemed invalid on the grounds of lack of participation by an attendant due to the loss of, or poor quality of the electronic connection as long as a quorum is maintained.

6. AD-INTERIM COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

6.1. Establishment

The Presbytery may establish Ad-Interim Committees at any time. Commissions may be erected by the Presbytery pursuant to *BCO* 15-1, 2.

6.2. Membership

Each commission shall consist of at least three TEs and three REs. Unless by specific action of the Presbytery, the Executive Committee shall appoint the members of ad-interim committees, and Presbytery shall appoint the members of commissions.

6.3. Quorum

Unless otherwise specified, a quorum of a committee shall be a majority of the members, and a quorum for a commission shall be two (2) TEs and two (2) REs.



CALL PACKAGE GUIDELINES CHECKLIST

Consider these essential items for a well-designed call package:



COMPENSATION

- ☐ Salary with annual Cost of Living Adjustment
- ☐ Housing allowance
- ☐ Social Security and Medicare (SECA) allowance
- ☐ Annual call package review

Optional: Tax withholding from the pastor's payroll;
Ministry expense reimbursement policy



INSURANCE

- ☐ Health insurance
- ☐ Life insurance
- ☐ Long-term and short-term disability insurance
- ☐ Dental, vision, and/or accidental death and dismemberment insurance

Optional: Health savings plan (HSA/FSA/HRA);
Long-term care insurance



RETIREMENT

- ☐ Retirement plan
- ☐ Retirement savings of 10–15% of salary plus housing allowance (combined contribution of employer and employee)



WELLBEING

- ☐ Official job description
- ☐ Access to counseling services
- ☐ Paid time off for vacation, sick leave, paternity leave, bereavement, educational leave, holidays
- ☐ Sabbatical leave

WANT MORE INFO?

[Access free call package guidelines](#), review details on each suggestion above, and schedule a consultation with a Geneva Benefits Group expert.





RESPONSIBILITY FOR WORSHIP SERVICES AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 2002 General Assembly took the following action regarding the worship services at the General Assembly:

“That the Administrative Committee through the local Host Committee be responsible for all services at General Assembly (RAO 10-3).”

Regarding Worship

- See Worship Service Guidelines (attached)
- Select proposed speakers
 - non-PCA speakers must be approved by the Administrative Committee at its October meeting
- Arrange for special music (soloists, instrumentalists, choirs, etc.)
 - Traditionally there is a pre-worship music time (30 minutes) prior to the beginning of the each worship service

This and other responsibilities are further detailed in the Host Committee Manual. If your presbytery has any questions regarding the Host Committee manual or has interest in hosting a General Assembly, please contact the Administrative Committee by phone at 678-825-1000 or by e-mail at events@pcanet.org.

WORSHIP SERVICE GUIDELINES

- Worship services shall be included as approved by the Assembly. The Administrative Committee must approve any non-PCA speaker. (RAO 10-3)
 - Speakers must be compatible with Reformed theology
 - Speakers are expected to respect PCA distinctives in theology, polity and worship
 - Speakers may not use the General Assembly worship services as a platform for promoting their own enterprise
 - For planning purposes, the Speaker must be approved at or before the October AC meeting prior to that General Assembly.
- Worship is to be conducted within the theological parameters of the Westminster Standards (WCF I.6; XX; XXI; XXVII; XXIX; WLC Qq. 107-100; Qq. 154-196; WSC Qq. 45-56; Qq. 89-93; 96-107).
 - Citations regarding the Sabbath are omitted because the Assembly does not meet on the Lord's Day.
 - Citations regarding baptism are omitted because baptism is not administered at the General Assembly.
- Though only BCO Chapters 56, 57, and 58 in our Directory of Worship have full constitutional status, the principles of our Directory of Worship should be honored.
- Remember that Reformed worship is neither Prescribed (with a required detailed liturgy, such as Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, or Lutheran), nor Free-Style (with no binding parameters, such as Quaker, charismatic, or Baptist), but rather Directed (bound by biblical and theological principles, yet allowing freedom within those biblical and theological parameters). The biblical-theological parameters are:
 - Reformed worship is biblical
 - Obeying and following biblical commands prohibitions, principles
 - Considering biblical precedents
 - Reformed worship is God-centered
 - Adoration of God, by the people of God, in accordance with the word of God
 - God is the audience
 - Reformed worship is participatory
 - The congregation is to participate in worship. Participation includes: congregational singing, common prayer, corporate confession of faith, responsive readings, unison readings, corporate confession of sin, giving offerings, or receiving communion.
 - Congregation should not merely observe the "worship leaders"
 - Reformed worship is historically informed
 - Filter all of Church history through the grid of Scripture
 - Do not dismiss or feel bound by historical worship practices
 - Reformed worship is culturally appropriate

- The first four principles (above) may be legitimately and differently expressed in various cultural settings and at different times
 - Within our biblical-theological parameters, there is liberty and variety
- Be considerate of the reality that there is a spectrum of worship practices in the PCA within the parameters of our constitution.
- Avoid unnecessary offense. Do not push the envelope in either extreme
 - High Church - choral selection sung in Latin, using only fermented wine in communion, or calling the assurance of pardon an “absolution”
 - Too Contemporary - liturgical dance, religious drama, or hard rock music
- Adhere strictly to the allotted time frame for services. Start on time; end on time!
 - The Assembly docket all worship services on Wednesday and Thursday, and generously allots 1½ hours (90 minutes) as the not-to-exceed time limit. The Assembly also docket a 30-minute devotional on Friday.
 - It is the General Assembly itself that decides the time allotted for worship services, by adopting its own docket, not the Host Committee
 - All who lead in any parts of the worship service (prayer, reading scripture, music, preaching, administering communion, etc.) should be aware of the time limitations.
 - Following the worship services:
 - Wednesday - the election of the moderator
 - Thursday - frequently the Assembly reconvenes for business
 - Friday – the Assembly will reconvene for business if needed
 - There is usually a 10-15 minute period of time between the ending of the service and the reconvening of the Assembly.

The Structure of the Services

An accepted principle of worship is that the structure of the service (order of worship, or shape of the liturgy) should itself be a proclamation or re-presentation of the Gospel.

In his “Gospel Worship Seminar,” Bryan Chapell cites a common flow, looking across the historic structures in Western Christianity:

- Recognition of God’s character
- Confession of our character
- Affirmation of God’s grace
- Instruction for personal transformation
- Responding in Covenant faithfulness

In his worship course at Reformed Theological Seminary, L. Roy Taylor advocated a similar flow:

- God’s Glory – Adoration
- Our Guilt
- God’s Grace - Combining the affirmation of God’s grace and biblical instruction for personal transformation

- Our Gratitude

The various components of the service may then be included in an order of worship that represents the Gospel. For example:

- God's Glory - Adoration
 - Call to worship
 - Doxology, Psalms, Hymns or spiritual Songs of Adoration
 - Prayers of Adoration
 - Scripture readings focusing on God's character
 - Confession of Faith [Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed, biblical confessions of faith such as I Timothy 3:16, Philippians 2:9-11, or Westminster Standards]. There are also musical settings of the Apostle's Creed, see new Trinity Hymnal, 741, 742.
- Our Guilt.
 - Corporate confession of sin via adapted scripture readings (ex. Psalm 51, 32, etc.), common prayer of confession read or sung, a litany of confession, Ten Commandments and/or Two Great Commandments read or sung, see new Trinity Hymnal, 724.
 - Individual, silent prayers of confession.
- God's Grace - Combining the affirmation of God's grace and biblical instruction for personal transformation.
 - Assurance of pardon, appropriate passages of scripture read, declaration by minister.
 - Congregational Response – a doxology, Psalms, Hymns or spiritual Songs of thanksgiving, prayers of thanksgiving (extemporaneous, directed, litany, collect, or common prayer).
 - Prayers of supplication (for ourselves) and intercession (for others) [a.k.a. "Pastoral prayer," "the long prayer," "prayers of the people"].
 - Scripture reading(s) - OT & NT (written word of God).
 - Prayer for illumination - understand of Scripture
 - Sermon, (proclaimed word of God), exposition and application of the word of God, biblical instruction for personal transformation
 - Psalms, Hymns or spiritual Songs of response to the word of God.
- Our Gratitude.
 - Giving - tithes, gifts, offerings, alms
 - Offertory
 - Communion - if administered, see details on Communion Service Guidelines
 - Benediction

Worship Speaker Deadlines

- One month prior: **Speaker Release Form** (provided by AC)
 - If the release form is not provided the sermon will not be recorded or webcast
- Three weeks out: **Sermon Title and Scripture Reference**
 - Needed for worship program publication and recording sales preparation

Music Team Tips

- Coordinate with AC for move-in, rehearsal, and sound checks
- Traditionally there is a pre-worship music time (30 minutes) prior to the beginning of the each worship service
- Provide all riders that include necessary audio-visual equipment – two months prior
- Submit Talent Release Form – one month prior
 - This release form is required for webcast
 - If there is a choir or musical group, one person may complete the release form for the whole group.
- Worship Music – we must abide by all copyright and webcasting regulations.
 - When printing lyrics in the worship bulletins or on PowerPoint slides, please include the PCA General Assembly CCLI number 79205.
 - We must report all song used to CCLI. Please provide:
 - The CCLI song number
 - Song Name
 - Writer or Composer
 - Publishing Company
 - Year the Song was Published
 - Please indicate if the song is public domain
- PowerPoint slides of worship lyrics and sermon notes:
 - The AC will provide the needed technical specs
 - Provide slides at least one month prior to the General Assembly

Overtures

FORMAT FOR OVERTURES TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Submission guidelines:

Please send your overture to ac@pcanet.org. We prefer to receive two files:

- A Word file we use to format for standardizing and Commissioner Handbook needs.
- A signed PDF.

If you prefer to send your signed copy via the mail, please address to:

PCA Office of the Stated Clerk
1700 North Brown Road
Suite 105
Lawrenceville, GA 30043

The due dates for all overtures may be found on the Due Dates page 003 of this Handbook.

Guidelines

from *Rules of Assembly Operations (RAO)*, Article XI

An overture ordinarily is the request of a presbytery for action by the General Assembly upon a specific matter. (RAO 11-4)

No overture will be considered by the General Assembly until it first has been presented to a presbytery. If approved by the presbytery, it will come before the Assembly as the overture of that court. An overture requested by a ruling elder commissioner to presbytery, a teaching elder, or a session, but rejected by the presbytery, may be presented to the Assembly, provided the overture includes as an attachment a copy of the relevant extract from the minutes of the meeting at which presbytery rejected the overture or correspondence from presbytery's Stated Clerk confirming presbytery's rejection of the overture. Such an overture must be the same overture as that presented to and rejected by the presbytery. (RAO 11-10)

Format Template

Overture from the _____ Presbytery

Whereas, ... [text of the preamble clauses]; and

Whereas, ... [text of the last preamble clause];

Therefore, be it resolved that the 52nd General Assembly... [state the action to be taken];

Be it further resolved that [state any additional action to be taken].

Adopted by the _____ Presbytery at its stated meeting, [date]

Attested by RE/TE [name], Stated Clerk

If the overture proposes an amendment to the *BCO* or the *RAO*, the form should be as follows:

Overture from the _____ Presbytery

Whereas, ... [text of the preamble clauses]; and

Whereas, ... [text of the last preamble clause];

Therefore, be it resolved that the 52nd General Assembly amend [the passage to be amended] as follows (~~strikethrough~~ for deletions, underlining for additions).

[the provision with amendments noted by strikethrough and underlining]

So that the amended passage would read:

[the final form of the provision as it would read if the overture passes with no strikethroughs or underlining]

Be it further resolved that [state any additional action to be taken].

Adopted by the _____ Presbytery at its stated meeting, [date]

Attested by RE/TE [name], Stated Clerk

Deadlines

90 Days before General Assembly to be included in the *Commissioner Handbook* (RAO 11-7)

60 Days before General Assembly for all overtures requiring reference to the Committee on Constitutional Business—that is, proposing amendments to the *BCO* or *RAO* (RAO 11-6)

31 Days before General Assembly for all other overtures (RAO 11-8)

No overtures received by the Stated Clerk less than one month prior to the opening of the meeting of the General Assembly shall be referred to or considered by the General Assembly convening in that year. An overture proposed by a commissioner to the General Assembly during its proceedings shall be treated as new business (cf. 13-1, 13-2). (RAO 11-9)

Referrals

RAO 11-5 All overtures shall be published in the *Commissioner Handbook* with reference for consideration indicated. The Stated Clerk shall refer overtures as follows. The Stated Clerk's referral shall be final unless redirected by a vote of the General Assembly.

- a. All overtures requesting amendment of the Book of Church Order or the Rules of Assembly Operations shall be referred to the Committee on Constitutional Business for its advice to the relevant Committee(s) as listed below.
- b. All overtures proposing amendment to the Constitution shall be referred to the Overtures Committee. The Stated Clerk may also refer such overtures to other Committees of Commissioners, other permanent Committees or Agencies, or other ad interim or special committees for advice only to the Overtures Committee.
- c. All overtures proposing amendment to the Rules of Assembly Operations having to do with the nature or responsibilities of a permanent Committee or Agency shall be referred to the Overtures Committee and to the permanent Committee(s) or Agency(ies) that would be impacted by the proposed change. In such cases the

- permanent Committee(s) or Agency(ies) and the relevant Committee(s) of Commissioners shall be given the opportunity to meet with the Overtures Committee to share their proposed response(s). Such opportunity shall occur at a mutually convenient time or at the beginning of the Overtures Committee's Tuesday afternoon session. The General Assembly shall act on the overture on the basis of the recommendation of the Overtures Committee, recognizing that the members of the permanent Committee(s) or Agency(ies) and the relevant Committee(s) of Commissioners will be able to enter into floor debate on that recommendation.
- d. Any other overture having to do with the nature or responsibilities of a permanent Committee or Agency shall be referred by the Stated Clerk to the appropriate permanent Committee or Agency, ad interim committee, or special committee.
 - e. All overtures concerning presbytery boundaries or the formation of a new presbytery shall be referred by the Stated Clerk to the permanent Committee on Mission to North America.
 - f. All other overtures shall be referred by the Stated Clerk to the Overtures Committee.

Study Committees & Memorials

RAO 11-11 All communications or overtures which propose or request that General Assembly appoint a study committee for any purpose shall contain as a part of the request or proposal a statement of the maximum amount to be budgeted for the study committee (see 9-2).

RAO 11-5 No communication or overture shall be received that seeks to memorialize someone

2025-2026
BCO AMENDMENTS SENT DOWN TO PRESBYTERIES
by the 52nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY
for ADVICE AND CONSENT

NOTE: The Stated Clerk's Office sends the proposed amendments only in their final form as approved by the General Assembly. Each Item must be voted upon as a whole and may not be divided, even when multiple sections of the *BCO* are being amended.

ITEM 1: Amend BCO 8-4, 20-1, 21-1, 21-12, and 23-1 for the calling and dissolution of TE relationships for Needful Works (~~strike through~~ for deletions, underlining for additions)

[Overture 30 was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

8-4. As the Lord has given different gifts to men and has committed to some special gifts and callings, the Church is authorized to call and appoint some to labor as teaching elders in such works as may be needful to the Church (*cf. BCO 21-12*). When a teaching elder is called to such needful work, it shall be incumbent upon him to make full proof of his ministry by disseminating the Gospel for the edification of the Church. He shall make a report to the Presbytery at least once each year.

20-1. Before a candidate, or licentiate, can be ordained to the office of the ministry, he must receive a call to a definite work. Ordinarily the call must come from a church, Presbytery, a permanent Committee or Agency (see BCO 14-1.12), or the General Assembly of this denomination. If the call comes from another source, the Presbytery shall always make a record of the reasons why it considers the work to be a valid Christian ministry. (See also *BCO* 8-7 and 21-1).

21-1. No minister, licentiate or candidate shall receive a call from a church or a call to a needful work (BCO 21-12) but by the permission of his Presbytery. When a call has been presented to the Presbytery, if found in order and the Presbytery deems it for the good of the Church, they shall place it in the hands of the person to whom it is addressed.

21-12. Needful Works

a. A minister, licentiate, or candidate that receives a call from a body other than a PCA church shall be considered to have a call to a Needful Work (*cf. BCO* 8-4 if the call is approved by Presbytery). Such calls shall include (without limitation): (i) calls from the General Assembly or a permanent Committee or Agency, (ii) chaplaincy calls from a Presbytery, MNA, other permanent Committee or Agency, or other body, (iii) missionary calls from MTW or other missionary society, (iv) campus minister calls from RUF, (v) calls from outside the PCA, and (vi) calls to be a teacher in a school of divinity or to give instruction in the doctrines and duties of religion in a school, college, or university.

b. Ordination to a Needful Work. The day appointed for the ordination having come, and the Presbytery being convened, a sermon suitable for the occasion shall be preached by a person appointed or invited by the Presbytery. The Presbytery member appointed to preside

shall afterwards briefly recite from the pulpit the proceedings of the Presbytery preparatory to the ordination; he shall point out the nature and importance of the ordinance, and endeavor to impress the audience with a proper sense of the solemnity of the transaction.

Questions for Ordination

Then, addressing himself to the candidate, he shall propose to him the following questions:

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the *Confession of Faith* and the *Catechisms* of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will on your own initiative, make known to your Presbytery the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?

3. Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in America, in conformity with the general principles of Biblical polity?

4. Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

5. Have you been induced, as far as you know your 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?

6. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace and unity of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

7. Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your 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 your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the flock of which God shall make you overseer?

8. Do you now undertake this Needful Work, and do you promise, in reliance on God for strength, to be faithful in the discharge of all the duties incumbent on you as a minister of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ?

The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the presiding minister shall propose to representatives from the entity extending the call the following questions:

1. Do you, representatives from the entity extending the call, continue to profess your readiness to receive _____, whom you have called to this Needful Work?

2. Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love?

3. Do you promise to encourage him in his labors, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?

4. Do you engage to continue to him while he is in this call that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised, and to furnish him with whatever you may see needful for the honor of religion and for his comfort among you?

The representatives from the entity extending the call having answered these questions in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the candidate shall kneel, and the presiding minister shall, with prayer and the laying on of hands of the Presbytery, according to the apostolic example, solemnly set him apart to the holy office of the Gospel ministry. Prayer being ended, he shall rise from his knees; and the minister who presides shall first, followed by all members of the Presbytery, take him by the right hand, saying, in words to this effect:

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

The presiding minister shall then say:

I now pronounce and declare that _____ has been regularly elected, and ordained, agreeable to the Word of God, and according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America; and that as such he is entitled to all support, encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

After which the minister presiding, or some other teaching or ruling elder appointed for the purpose, shall give a solemn charge to the minister to persevere in the discharge of his duties, and then after prayer and the singing of a psalm, or hymn, the congregation shall be dismissed with the benediction. The Presbytery shall duly record its proceedings.

Installation to a Needful Work. In the installation of an ordained minister to a Needful Work, the following questions are to be substituted for those addressed to a candidate for ordination, namely:

Questions for Installation

1. Are you now willing to take charge of this Needful Work, agreeable to your declaration in accepting the call?

2. Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that, in taking upon you this charge, you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of the Church?

3. Do you solemnly promise that, by the assistance of the grace of God, you will endeavor faithfully to discharge all the duties of this Needful Work, and will be careful to maintain a deportment in all respects becoming a minister of the Gospel of Christ, agreeable to your ordination engagements?

The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the presiding minister shall propose to the calling entity the following questions:

1. Do you, representatives from the entity extending the call, continue to profess your readiness to receive _____, whom you have called to this Needful Work?

2. Do you promise to encourage him in his labors, and to assist his endeavors in instruction and spiritual edification for those to whom he is called to minister?

3. Do you engage to continue to him while he is in this call that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised, and to furnish him with whatever you may see needful for the honor of religion and for his comfort among you?

c. Transfer of man in a Needful Work. When a man who has a call to a Needful Work desires to move from one field of labor to another, if the field of labor is in another Presbytery, the minister may be examined and approved by that Presbytery to labor in the field to which he is being transferred, and may be released for transfer by his present Presbytery (see BCO 13-6), or the procedures set forth in BCO 13-2 (sentence two) and BCO 19-1 shall be followed.

23-1. [added to the current 23-1 as a new, final paragraph]

In the case of a Needful Work (BCO 21-12), when any minister shall tender the resignation of his call to his Presbytery, the Presbytery shall cite such an entity to appear to show cause why the Presbytery should or should not accept the resignation. If such an entity fails to appear, or if its reasons for retaining the minister be deemed insufficient, his resignation shall be accepted and the relation dissolved. If any calling entity desires to be relieved of the minister called to the particular needful work, a similar procedure shall be observed. In any case, the minister must not physically leave the field until the Presbytery or its commission empowered to handle uncontested requests for dissolution has dissolved the relation.

ITEM 2: Amend BCO 12-3 so that a Session may elect one of its members as moderator in judicial cases (~~striketrough~~ for deletions, underlining for additions)

[Overture 37 was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

12-3. When a church is without a pastor, the moderator of the Session may be either a minister appointed for that purpose by the Presbytery, with consent of the Session, or one invited by the Session to preside on a particular occasion, or one of its own members elected to preside. In judicial cases, whether the church is with or without a pastor, the Session may elect one of its members to preside as moderator shall be a or invite a minister of the Presbytery to which the church belongs to preside as moderator.

ITEM 3: Amend BCO 15-5.c to clarify the handling of an SJC minority decision by GA (~~striketrough~~ for deletions, underlining for additions)

[Overture 29 was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

15-5.

- c. (1) If, within twenty-four (24) hours of the time of adjournment of a Standing Judicial Commission meeting at which a final decision was rendered in a case, at least one-third (1/3) of the ~~voting~~ members of the Standing Judicial Commission voting on a particular final decision file written notice of their intention to file a minority decision with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, and within twenty (20) days from the adjournment do file such a minority decision, such minority decision shall be considered a minority report and shall be referred, with the report of the Standing Judicial Commission, to the General Assembly. In each instance “file” shall be understood as defined by the *Operating Manual for Standing Judicial Commission*.
- (2) No such reference* from the Standing Judicial Commission shall be considered by the General Assembly unless the report of the Standing Judicial Commission, ~~and the minority report, the Record of the Case, and all briefs timely filed by the parties~~ have been distributed in electronic form mailed to the clerk of Session of each church and published in the *Commissioner Handbook* at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting of the General Assembly.
- (3) The Assembly shall act upon such a reference* from the Standing Judicial Commission, in each case without question, discussion, debate, or amendment, as follows:
 - (a) The Standing Judicial Commission shall have 30 minutes to present its decision to the Assembly.
 - (b) The minority shall have 30 minutes to present its decision to the Assembly.
 - (c) The Standing Judicial Commission shall have 10 minutes to reply to the minority report.

- (d) The decision of the minority shall be proposed, and the General Assembly shall, without question, discussion, debate, or amendment, approve or disapprove of the minority report.
 - (e) If the General Assembly approves the minority report, it shall be the decision of the General Assembly and printed in its minutes. There may be no complaint or appeal from such a final decision of the General Assembly.
 - (f) If the General Assembly disapproves the minority report, the General Assembly shall take up the decision of the Standing Judicial Commission and without question, discussion, debate, or amendment, approve or disapprove of the decision of the Standing Judicial Commission.
- (4) If the General Assembly approves of ~~a proposed~~ the Standing Judicial Commission's decision, it shall be the decision of the General Assembly, and printed in its minutes. There may be no complaint or appeal from such a final decision of the General Assembly. If the General Assembly finally disapproves of both proposed decisions, it must set the case for hearing before the General Assembly or a special commission of six (6) teaching elders and six (6) ruling elders appointed by the Moderator of the General Assembly ~~it~~, and in either instance the case shall be tried on the record as delivered to the Stated Clerk. Any such special commission shall then proceed to consider the case and shall report its decision, in like manner, to the General Assembly for its approval or disapproval. In any event, the full record of the case, including written testimony of witnesses, all documents, exhibits and papers shall be delivered to the Stated Clerk for permanent preservation.

ITEM 4: Amend BCO 18-2 to allow flexibility on applications to come under care (~~striketrough~~ for deletions, underlining for additions)

[Overture 6 was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

18-2. Every applicant for the ministry must put himself under the care of Presbytery, which should ordinarily be the Presbytery that has jurisdiction of the church of which he is a member. The endorsement of his Session must be given to the Presbytery, consisting of testimonials regarding his Christian character and promise of usefulness in the ministry. The endorsement should also describe the activities of ministry the applicant has participated in with brief evaluation.

Every applicant for care shall be a member of the congregation whose session provides an endorsement for at least six months before filing his application, except in those cases deemed extraordinary by the Presbytery.

Every applicant must file his application with the clerk of the Presbytery ~~at least one month before the meeting of the Presbytery~~. An applicant for care may not be received under care and examined for ordination at the same meeting of the Presbytery, since he must serve a period of at least one year of internship prior to ordination (see BCO 19-7 and 21-4). An applicant for internship is obliged to be under care and may be licensed to preach the Gospel;

further, one who is not already under care may be taken under care, be licensed to preach the Gospel, and become an intern at the same meeting of Presbytery.

ITEM 5: Amend BCO 24-1 to require ruling elders and deacons to state confessional differences (~~striketrough~~ for deletions, underlining for additions)

[Overture 8 was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

24-1. Every church shall elect persons to the offices of ruling elder and deacon in the following manner: At such times as determined by the Session, communicant members of the congregation may submit names to the Session, keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be an active male member who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Nominees for the office of ruling elder and/or deacon shall receive instruction in the qualifications and work of the office.

- a. Each nominee shall be examined in:
 1. his Christian experience, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9),
 2. his knowledge of Bible content,
 3. his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* Preface III, The Constitution Defined),
 4. the duties of the office to which he has been nominated, and
 5. his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination. (*BCO* 24-6).
- b. In the examination of the nominee's personal character, the Session shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The nominee must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, the nominee must exercise great care not to diminish the seriousness of those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in his progress in holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-11).
- c. Notwithstanding the above, the Session may render a decision on Christian experience at any point in the process, and based on that decision, may judge him ineligible for that election.
- d. While our Constitution does not require the nominee's affirmation of every statement and/or proposition of doctrine in our *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms*, it is the right and responsibility of the Session to determine if the nominee is out of accord with any of the fundamentals of these doctrinal standards and, as a consequence, may not be able

in good faith sincerely to receive and adopt the *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms* of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures (cf. *BCO* 21-5, Q.2; 24-6, Q.2).

- e. Therefore, in examining a nominee for ordination, the Session shall inquire not only into the nominee's knowledge and views in the areas specified above but also shall require the nominee to state the specific instances in which he may differ with the *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms* in any of their statements and/or propositions. The court may grant an exception to any difference of doctrine only if in the court's judgment the nominee's declared difference is not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine because the difference is neither hostile to the system nor strikes at the vitals of religion. The Session shall record in its records (*BCO* 12-7) such declared differences (or that there were no differences) and its assessment of each declared difference in accordance with the categories set forth in *RAO* 16-3.e.7.
- f. If there are candidates eligible for the election, the Session shall report to the congregation those eligible, giving at least thirty (30) days prior notice of the time and place of a congregational meeting for elections.
- g. If one-fourth (1/4) of the persons entitled to vote shall at any time request the Session to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing additional officers, it shall be the duty of the Session to call such a meeting on the above procedure. The number of officers to be elected shall be determined by the congregation after hearing the Session's recommendation.

[**Stated Clerk's Note:** If both items 5 and 6 pass, the language proposed in Item 6 will be inserted into the new *BCO* 24-1.c.]

ITEM 6: Amend *BCO* 24-1 to clarify a Session's role in examining officer nominees (~~strike through~~ for deletions, underlining for additions)

[Overture 24 was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

24-1. Every church shall elect persons to the offices of ruling elder and deacon in the following manner: At such times as determined by the Session, communicant members of the congregation may submit names to the Session, keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be an active male member who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Nominees for the office of ruling elder and/or deacon shall receive instruction in the qualifications and work of the office. Each nominee shall be examined in:

- a. his Christian experience, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9),
- b. his knowledge of Bible content,

- c. his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* Preface III, The Constitution Defined),
- d. the duties of the office to which he has been nominated, and
- e. his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination. (*BCO* 24-6).

In the examination of the nominee's personal character, the Session shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The nominee must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, the nominee must exercise great care not to diminish the seriousness of those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy in his progress in holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Notwithstanding the above, the Session may render a decision on Christian experience at any point in the process, and based on that decision, may judge him, whether previously ordained or not, ineligible for that election.

If there are candidates eligible for the election, the Session shall report to the congregation those eligible, giving at least thirty (30) days prior notice of the time and place of a congregational meeting for elections.

If one-fourth (1/4) of the persons entitled to vote shall at any time request the Session to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing additional officers, it shall be the duty of the Session to call such a meeting on the above procedure. The number of officers to be elected shall be determined by the congregation after hearing the Session's recommendation.

[Stated Clerk's Note: If both items 5 and 6 pass, the language proposed in Item 6 will be inserted into the new *BCO* 24-1.c.]

ITEM 7: Amend *BCO* 31-10 to require vote of the entire court to suspend an officer's official functions during process (~~striketrough~~ for deletions, underlining for additions)

[Overture 31 was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

31-10. When a member of a church court is under process, all his official functions may be administratively suspended at the court's discretion; but this shall never be done in the way of censure, and this requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority of members present and voting (not counting abstentions) at the meeting of the Session or Presbytery, even if the process is being conducted by a commission.

ITEM 8: Amend BCO 35-9 to require recording all parts of a trial (~~striketrough~~ for deletions, underlining for additions)

[Overture 40 was answered in the affirmative.]

35-9. All ~~testimony~~ parts of a trial other than deliberations shall be recorded (by transcription, audiotape, videotape, or some other electronic means) and witnesses informed of such prior to testifying. Such recording becomes part of the Record of the Case. However, in order to be referenced in written or oral briefs, such recording must be transcribed and the transcription authenticated by the trial court. The court of final appeal may assess the cost of transcription equitably among the parties

ITEM 9: Amend BCO 36-4 to add language for the administration of definite suspension from office (~~striketrough~~ for deletions, underlining for additions)

[Overture 15 was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

36-4. Definite suspension from office should be administered in the presence of the court alone or in open session of the court, as it may deem best, and public announcement thereof shall be at the court's discretion. When the court has resolved to pass this sentence, the moderator shall address the offending brother to the following purpose:

Whereas, you, _____ (here describe the brother as a teaching elder, ruling elder, or deacon) are convicted by sufficient proof (or are guilty by your own confession) of the sin of _____ (here insert the offense), and have satisfied the court as to your repentance by the grace of God; yet for the credit of religion, the honor of Christ, and your own good we the _____ (Presbytery (or Church Session) in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, do now declare you suspended from the exercise of your office, and all the functions thereof, for _____ (here state the dates on which the suspension begins and ends).

To this shall be added such advice or admonition as may be judged necessary, and the whole shall be concluded with prayer to almighty God that He would follow this act of discipline with His blessing.

ITEM 10: Amend BCO 36-5 to conform the language to BCO 37-3 regarding suspension from office (~~striketrough~~ for deletions, underlining for additions)

[Overture 16 was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

Whereas, you, _____ (here describe the person as a teaching elder, ruling elder, deacon, or private member of the church) are

convicted by sufficient proof (or are guilty by your own confession) of the sin of _____ (here insert the offense), we the _____ (Presbytery (or Church Session) in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, do now declare you suspended from the Sacraments of the Church (and/or from the exercise of your office), until you give satisfactory evidence of repentance.

ITEM 11: Amend BCO 36-8 and 42-2 to provide for elevation of a censure without an entirely new trial (~~striketrough~~ for deletions, underlining for additions)

[Overture 32 was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

36-8. When members of a court wish to consider the elevation of an indefinite suspension, whether from office or from the Sacraments (*BCO* 36-5) to the censure of deposition or excommunication respectively, it shall not be required to initiate process *de novo* according to *BCO* 31-2 or *BCO* 32-2. The indefinitely suspended person is not in good standing and has already been found impenitent, resulting in indefinite suspension (*BCO* 30-3). However, the indefinitely suspended person has a right to a hearing in the matter. The court supervising the indefinite suspension may consider a motion to find him “incorrigible and contumacious” (*cf.* *BCO* 30-4) and present evidence to that effect. The court shall give at least thirty (30) days’ notice of such a motion to the indefinitely suspended person and permit him the privilege of the floor to plead and give evidence of his repentance before the court having jurisdiction (*BCO* 33-1, 34-1) and not any trial commission. The court, upon completing its hearing, shall vote to determine whether or not to elevate the indefinite suspension to deposition or excommunication. A person whose suspension is so elevated has the right of Appeal (*BCO* 42-2).

42-2. The only parties entitled to an appeal are those who have submitted to a regular trial, those appealing a censure in a *BCO* 38-1 case without process, those appealing the elevation of a censure under *BCO* 36-8, and those appealing a *BCO* 34-10 divestiture without censure.

ITEM 12: Amend BCO 41-3 to allow supplemental judges for a Session trial (~~striketrough~~ for deletions, underlining for additions)

[Overture 23 was answered in the affirmative.]

41-3. In making a reference the lower court may ask for advice only, or for final disposition of the matter referred; and in particular it may refer a judicial case with a request ~~for its trial and decision by the higher court.~~:

- a. That the higher court take original jurisdiction of the case, its trial, judgment, and whatever censure it deems warranted; or
- b. That the higher court provide additional teaching and/or ruling elders to serve with the lower court in a judicial case, as may seem prudent to the lower court, which additional elders, during their term of service on the case, shall have all

the rights and responsibilities of judges in the lower court, subject to the rights of the parties under BCO 32-16.

ITEM 13: Amend BCO 57-2 regarding the examination of young persons for admission to the sealing ordinances (~~striketrough~~ for deletions, underlining for additions)

[Overture 33 was answered in the affirmative.]

57-2. The time when young persons come to understand the Gospel cannot be precisely fixed. This must be left to the prudence of the Session, whose office it is to judge, after careful examination, the qualifications of those who apply for admission to sealing ordinances. The examination shall include an evaluation of the young person's credible profession of faith, the young person's understanding of the meaning of the Lord's Supper, and the young person's understanding of the questions in BCO 57-5.

2025-2026
BCO AMENDMENTS SENT DOWN TO PRESBYTERIES
by the 52nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY
for ADVICE AND CONSENT
 (thirteen items)

Name of Presbytery: _____

ITEM 1: Amend BCO 8-4, 20-1, 21-1, 21-12, and 23-1 for the calling and dissolution of TE relationships for Needful Works

_____FOR _____AGAINST _____ABSTAIN

Attest: _____ Date: _____
 Stated Clerk of Presbytery

ITEM 2: Amend BCO 12-3 so that a Session may elect one of its members as moderator in judicial cases

_____FOR _____AGAINST _____ABSTAIN

Attest: _____ Date: _____
 Stated Clerk of Presbytery

ITEM 3: Amend BCO 15-5.c to clarify the handling of an SJC minority decision by GA

_____FOR _____AGAINST _____ABSTAIN

Attest: _____ Date: _____
 Stated Clerk of Presbytery

ITEM 4: Amend BCO 18-2 to allow flexibility on applications to come under care

_____FOR _____AGAINST _____ABSTAIN

Attest: _____ Date: _____
 Stated Clerk of Presbytery

ITEM 5: Amend BCO 24-1 to require ruling elders and deacons to state confessional differences

_____	FOR	_____	AGAINST	_____	ABSTAIN
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Attest: _____ Date: _____
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

ITEM 6: Amend BCO 24-1 to clarify a Session's role in examining officer nominees

_____	FOR	_____	AGAINST	_____	ABSTAIN
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Attest: _____ Date: _____
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

ITEM 7: Amend BCO 31-10 to require vote of the entire court to suspend an officer's official functions during process

_____	FOR	_____	AGAINST	_____	ABSTAIN
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Attest: _____ Date: _____
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

ITEM 8: Amend BCO 35-9 to require recording all parts of a trial

_____	FOR	_____	AGAINST	_____	ABSTAIN
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Attest: _____ Date: _____
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

ITEM 9: Amend BCO 36-4 to add language for the administration of definite suspension from office

_____	FOR	_____	AGAINST	_____	ABSTAIN
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Attest: _____ Date: _____
Stated Clerk of Presbytery

ITEM 10: Amend BCO 36-5 to conform the language to BCO 37-3 regarding suspension from office

_____ FOR	_____ AGAINST	_____ ABSTAIN
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Attest: _____ Date: _____
 Stated Clerk of Presbytery

ITEM 11: Amend BCO 36-8 and 42-2 to provide for elevation of a censure without an entirely new trial

_____ FOR	_____ AGAINST	_____ ABSTAIN
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Attest: _____ Date: _____
 Stated Clerk of Presbytery

ITEM 12: Amend BCO 41-3 to allow supplemental judges for a Session trial

_____ FOR	_____ AGAINST	_____ ABSTAIN
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Attest: _____ Date: _____
 Stated Clerk of Presbytery

ITEM 13: Amend BCO 57-2 regarding the examination of young persons for admission to the sealing ordinances

_____ FOR	_____ AGAINST	_____ ABSTAIN
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Attest: _____ Date: _____
 Stated Clerk of Presbytery

LOCATION AND DATES OF UPCOMING ASSEMBLIES

53 rd General Assembly	June 22-26, 2026	Louisville, KY
54 th General Assembly	June 14-18, 2026	Milwaukee, WI
55 th General Assembly	June 26-30, 2026	Dallas, TX

As more locations and dates are confirmed for future General Assemblies, they will be listed on the PCA General Assembly website: <https://pcaga.org/>

If your presbytery is interested in hosting the General Assembly, please contact events@pcanet.org.



MEETING SCHEDULE FOR COMMITTEES OF COMMISSIONERS

PLEASE NOTE:

- ✓ These dates are subject to change. Please have your CoC appointees check the most current schedule online at www.pcaga.org before making travel arrangements.
- ✓ To serve on a Committee of Commissioners, you must be a registered commissioner.
- ✓ Room assignments will be announced in preparation materials for General Assembly.

MONDAY OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 8:00 a.m.** Commissioner Registration Open
- 10:00 a.m.** Briefing for Overtures Committee (Overtures Committee begins immediately after briefing)
- 11:00 a.m.** Briefing for Committee of Commissioners
- 12:00 noon** Lunch on your own
- 1:00 p.m.** Meetings of the Committees of Commissioners begin:
 Administrative Committee
 Covenant Theological Seminary
 Geneva Benefits Group
 Reformed University Fellowship

TUESDAY OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 7:00 a.m.** Commissioner Registration Opens
- 8:00 a.m.** Briefing for Committees of Commissioners
- 9:00 a.m.** Meetings of the Committees of Commissioners begin:
 Committee on Discipleship Ministries
 Covenant College
 Mission to North America
 Mission to the World
 PCA Foundation
 Ridge Haven
- 10:30 a.m.** Meeting of Committee of Commissioners on Interchurch Relations

REPORT OF APPOINTEES TO NOMINATING AND REVIEW OF PRESBYTERY RECORDS COMMITTEES

Due in the Stated Clerk's Office February 23, 2026

~ Appointments effective immediately~

Presbytery: _____

Attested by: _____

Stated Clerk of Presbytery

Nominations Committee Chairman: _____

Name

Appointee to Nominating Committee

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Appointee to Review of Presbytery Records (RPR) Committee

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Send to: Stated Clerk of General Assembly ♦ 1700 North Brown Road, Suite 105 ♦
Lawrenceville, GA, 30043 ♦ email: hharrison@pcanet.org

NOTE: This form should be submitted to the PCA Stated Clerk's Office by the date above in order for the Nominating Committee appointee to receive information regarding the committee's March meeting, where the bulk of the work is done. This form may be used however, anytime during the 3-year term that there is a change to the representative of either Committee.

**Please note that a Nominee Biographical Form
(060) is NOT NEEDED from these appointees.**

FORMULA FOR APPOINTMENT TO NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND RPR

Please follow the guidelines below carefully, so that all presbyteries will be electing the proper type of elder to each Committee, and there will be equal representation of ruling elders to teaching elders (BCO 14-1, 10). Terms on the Nominating Committee and Review of Presbytery Records (RPR) Committee are 3 years, ending after General Assembly in year noted under "Class". If, for any reason, a presbytery must replace its previously appointed representative, the same type of elder should be appointed.

Presbytery	Type of Elder for Nominating Committee	Type of Elder for RPR	Class
1. Warrior	RE	TE	2028
2. Gulf Coast	TE	RE	2028
3. Westminster	RE	TE	2027
4. Central Georgia	TE	RE	2027
5. Metro Atlanta	TE	RE	2026
6. South Florida	RE	TE	2026
7. Covenant	RE	TE	2028
8. Calvary	TE	RE	2028
9. Grace	RE	TE	2027
10. Mississippi Valley	TE	RE	2027
11. North Texas	TE	RE	2026
12. Evangel	RE	TE	2026
13. James River	RE	TE	2028
14. Tennessee Valley	TE	RE	2028
15. Highlands	RE	TE	2027
16. Pacific	TE	RE	2027
17. New River	TE	RE	2026
19. Ascension	RE	TE	2028
20. Central Florida	TE	RE	2028
21. Central Carolina	RE	TE	2027
22. Eastern Carolina	TE	RE	2027
23. Arizona (previously Southwest)	TE	RE	2026
24. Philadelphia	RE	TE	2026
25. Siouxlands	RE	TE	2028
26. Heritage	TE	RE	2028
27. Eastern Canada	RE	TE	2027
28. Great Lakes	TE	RE	2027
29. Illiana	TE	RE	2026
30. New Jersey	TE	RE	2026
31. Northern New England	RE	TE	2028
33. Pacific Northwest	RE	TE	2027
34. Missouri	TE	RE	2027
35. Northern Illinois	TE	RE	2026
36. Korean Eastern	RE	TE	2026
37. Korean Southwest	RE	TE	2028
38. Palmetto: Columbia Area	TE	RE	2028
39. South Texas	RE	TE	2027
40. Southeast Alabama	TE	RE	2027
41. Korean Central	TE	RE	2026
42. Korean Southeastern	RE	TE	2026
43. Susquehanna Valley	RE	TE	2028

Presbytery	Type of Elder for Nominating Committee	Type of Elder for RPR	Class
44. Korean Southern	TE	RE	2028
45. Heartland	RE	TE	2027
46. South Coast	TE	RE	2027
47. Northern California	TE	RE	2026
48. Potomac	RE	TE	2026
49. Southwest Florida	RE	TE	2028
50. Rocky Mountain	TE	RE	2028
51. Korean Capital	RE	TE	2027
52. Korean Northwest	TE	RE	2027
53. Southeast Louisiana	TE	RE	2026
54. Pittsburgh	RE	TE	2026
55. Fellowship	RE	TE	2028
56. Nashville	TE	RE	2028
57. Metropolitan NY	RE	TE	2027
58. North Florida	TE	RE	2026
59. New York State	RE	TE	2026
60. Southern New England	TE	RE	2027
61. Piedmont Triad	TE	RE	2028
62. Ohio Valley	RE	TE	2028
63. Chesapeake	RE	TE	2026
64. Iowa	TE	RE	2026
65. Blue Ridge	TE	RE	2028
66. Houston Metro	RE	TE	2027
67. Savannah River	TE	RE	2027
68. Suncoast Florida	RE	TE	2026
69. Gulfstream	TE	RE	2026
70. Chicago Metro	TE	RE	2027
71. Wisconsin	RE	TE	2027
72. Canada West	TE	RE	2027
73. Eastern Pennsylvania	TE	RE	2027
74. Philadelphia Metro West	TE	RE	2027
75. Northwest Georgia	RE	TE	2028
76. Georgia Foothills	TE	RE	2028
77. Platte Valley	RE	TE	2026
78. Providence	RE	TE	2027
79. Ohio	RE	TE	2028
80. Central Indiana	TE	RE	2026
81. Catawba Valley	TE	RE	2027
82. Korean Northeastern	RE	TE	2027
83. Tidewater	TE	RE	2026
84. Korean Southwest O.C.	TE	RE	2027
85. Pee Dee	TE	RE	2028
86. Lowcountry	TE	RE	2028
88. Hills and Plains	TE	RE	2027
89. Rio Grande	RE	TE	2027
90. West Hudson	TE	RE	2028

CURRENT APPOINTEES TO NOMINATING COMMITTEE*

CHAIRMAN

TE Benjamin Lyon
Tidewater Presbytery
ben@trinitynorfolk.com

SECRETARY

TE Timothy LeCroy
New York Presbytery
pastor.tim.lecroy@gmail.com

Please remember the class year stays with the presbytery – not the representative.

<u>Presbytery</u>	<u>Type of Elder</u>	<u>Class of</u>	<u>Current Member</u>
Arizona	RE	2026	TE Kelley Hand
Ascension	TE	2028	
Blue Ridge	RE	2028	
Calvary	RE	2028	
Canada West	TE	2027	TE Michael Hsu
Catawba Valley	TE	2027	RE Dan Nicholas
Central Carolina	RE	2027	RE George Kurz
Central Florida	RE	2028	
Central Georgia	TE	2027	TE Jeff Birch
Central Indiana	RE	2026	TE Charles Anderson
Chesapeake	TE	2026	TE Mike Khandjian
Chicago Metro	TE	2027	TE Geoff Ziegler
Covenant	TE	2028	TE Dan Anderson
Eastern Canada	RE	2027	TE Dan MacDonald
Eastern Carolina	TE	2027	TE James Sutton
Eastern Pennsylvania	RE	2027	RE Samuel Chez
Evangel	TE	2026	TE Michael Brock
Fellowship	TE	2028	
Georgia Foothills	RE	2028	
Grace	RE	2027	RE Troy Gibson
Great Lakes	TE	2027	RE Chip Cogan
Gulf Coast	RE	2028	RE John McMenamin
Gulfstream	RE	2026	TE Matt Eusey
Heartland	RE	2027	TE Rick Franks
Heritage	RE	2028	
Highlands	RE	2027	RE Stephen Lutz
Hills and Plains	TE	2027	TE Wilson Van Hooser
Houston Metro	RE	2027	TE Fred Greco
Illiana	RE	2026	TE Alex Eppstein
Iowa	RE	2026	TE Brian Janssen
James River	TE	2028	
Korean Capital	RE	2027	TE Steve Yoon
Korean Central	RE	2026	TE Paul Chi
Korean Eastern	TE	2026	TE Andrew Kim
Korean Northeastern	RE	2027	TE Hoochan Paul Lee
Korean Northwest	TE	2027	
Korean Southeastern	TE	2026	TE Anthony Lee
Korean Southern	RE	2028	
Korean Southwest	TE	2028	TE Daniel Chin
Korean Southwest OC	TE	2027	
Lowcountry	TE	2028	
Metro Atlanta	RE	2026	RE Davon Stack

Metropolitan New York	RE	2027	TE Bruce O'Neil
Mississippi Valley	TE	2027	TE Zach Owens
Missouri	TE	2027	TE Christopher Smith
Nashville	RE	2028	
New Jersey	RE	2026	TE Stephen O'Neill
New River	RE	2026	TE Michael VanDerLinden
New York State	TE	2026	TE Timothy LeCroy
North Florida	RE	2026	TE W. Dennis Griffith
North Texas	RE	2026	RE David Westerfield
Northern California	RE	2026	TE Bryce Hales
Northern Illinois	RE	2026	TE Justin Coverstone
Northern New England	TE	2028	
Northwest Georgia	TE	2028	
Ohio	TE	2028	RE Scott Wulff
Ohio Valley	TE	2028	
Pacific	TE	2027	TE Kyle Wells
Pacific Northwest	RE	2027	RE Howie Donahoe
Palmetto	RE	2028	
Pee Dee	RE	2028	TE Matthew Adams
Philadelphia	TE	2026	RE Scott Dirksen
Philadelphia Metro West	TE	2027	TE John Orlando
Piedmont Triad	RE	2028	
Pittsburgh	TE	2026	TE Jon Price
Platte Valley	TE	2026	TE Michael Gordon
Potomac	TE	2026	TE Porter Harlow
Providence	RE	2027	RE Frank Cohee
Rio Grande	RE	2027	TE Dustin Hunt
Rocky Mountain	RE	2028	
Savannah River	TE	2027	TE Mike Hearon
Siouxlands	TE	2028	
South Coast	TE	2027	TE Adam Feichtmann
South Florida	TE	2026	RE Greg Miseyko
South Texas	RE	2027	RE Joshua Torrey
Southeast Alabama	TE	2027	TE Parker Johnson
Southern Louisiana	RE	2026	RE Aaron Collier
Southern New England	TE	2027	TE Curran Bishop
Southwest Florida	TE	2028	
Suncoast Florida	TE	2026	TE Geoff Henderson
Susquehanna Valley	TE	2028	TE Frank Hitchings
Tennessee Valley	RE	2028	
Tidewater	RE	2026	TE Ben Lyon
Warrior	TE	2028	
West Hudson	RE	2028	
Westminster	RE	2027	RE David Saulsbury
Wisconsin	RE	2027	TE Michael Vogel

**CURRENT APPOINTEES TO
COMMITTEE ON REVIEW OF PRESBYTERY RECORDS***

CHAIRMAN TE Stephen Tipton s.tipton12@gmail.com	VICE CHAIRMAN RE Matt Fender matt@mattfender.net	SECRETARY TE Thomas Rickard thomas.rickard@sevenspringspresbyterian.com	ASST. SECRETARY TE Ben Thomas ben.thomas@sovereigngrace.org
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Please remember the class year stays with the presbytery – not the representative.

<u>Presbytery</u>	<u>Type of Elder</u>	<u>Class of</u>	<u>Current Member</u>
Arizona	TE	2026	TE Joshua Harp
Ascension	RE	2028	
Blue Ridge	TE	2028	
Calvary	TE	2028	
Canada West	RE	2027	RE Eric Nederlof
Catawba Valley	RE	2027	TE Steve Stout
Central Carolina	TE	2027	TE Ben Thomas
Central Florida	TE	2028	
Central Georgia	RE	2027	RE James Hildebrand
Central Indiana	TE	2026	
Chesapeake	RE	2026	RE Bradley Chwastyk
Chicago Metro	RE	2027	TE Patrick Fischl
Covenant	RE	2028	TE Doug Barcroft
Eastern Canada	TE	2027	TE Sherman Wong
Eastern Carolina	RE	2027	
Eastern Pennsylvania	TE	2027	RE Terry Carnes
Evangel	RE	2026	RE Walter Monroe
Fellowship	RE	2028	
Georgia Foothills	TE	2028	
Grace	TE	2027	TE Brian McCollough
Great Lakes	RE	2027	TE Elliott Pinegar
Gulf Coast	TE	2028	TE Stephen Tipton
Gulfstream	TE	2026	
Heartland	TE	2027	RE Peter Griffith
Heritage	TE	2028	
Highlands	TE	2027	TE Jim Curtis
Hills and Plains	RE	2027	TE Aaron Raines
Houston Metro	TE	2027	RE Ryan Bowling
Illiana	TE	2026	
Iowa	TE	2026	TE Wayne Larson
James River	RE	2028	
Korean Capital	TE	2027	
Korean Central	TE	2026	TE Brian Park
Korean Eastern	RE	2026	
Korean Northeastern	TE	2027	TE Hoochan Paul Lee
Korean Northwest	RE	2027	
Korean Southeastern	RE	2026	
Korean Southern	TE	2028	
Korean Southwest	RE	2028	
Korean Southwest O.C.	RE	2027	
Lowcountry	RE	2028	
Metro Atlanta	TE	2026	TE Coleman Erkens

Metropolitan New York	TE	2027	TE Jim Fredere
Mississippi Valley	RE	2027	RE Steven Holman
Missouri	RE	2027	RE Ken Leslie
Nashville	TE	2028	
New Jersey	TE	2026	TE Stephen O'Neill
New River	TE	2026	TE Peter Green
New York State	RE	2026	TE Timothy LeCroy
North Florida	TE	2026	TE Tommy Park
North Texas	TE	2026	TE Donny Friederichsen
Northern California	TE	2026	TE Tag Tuck
Northern Illinois	TE	2026	TE Wes White (substitute)
Northern New England	RE	2028	
Northwest Georgia	RE	2028	
Ohio	RE	2028	TE Sam Thoman
Ohio Valley	RE	2028	
Pacific	RE	2027	
Pacific Northwest	TE	2027	TE Adam Parker
Palmetto	TE	2028	
Pee Dee	TE	2028	RE Paul Goodrich
Philadelphia	RE	2026	
Philadelphia Metro West	RE	2027	
Piedmont Triad	TE	2028	
Pittsburgh	RE	2026	TE Frank Moser
Platte Valley	RE	2026	
Potomac	RE	2026	RE Mark Doehrnert
Providence	TE	2027	TE Jacob Hale
Rio Grande	TE	2027	
Rocky Mountain	TE	2028	
Savannah River	RE	2027	TE Evan Gear
Siouxlands	RE	2028	
South Coast	RE	2027	
South Florida	RE	2026	TE Robbie Crouse
South Texas	TE	2027	TE Danny Morgan
Southeast Alabama	RE	2027	TE Reed DePace
Southern Louisiana	TE	2026	RE Alec Moyer
Southern New England	RE	2027	
Southwest Florida	RE	2028	
Suncoast Florida	RE	2026	TE David Stewart
Susquehanna Valley	RE	2028	
Tennessee Valley	TE	2028	RE Albert Leavengood
Tidewater	TE	2026	TE Jason Schubert
Warrior	RE	2028	
West Hudson	TE	2028	
Westminster	TE	2027	TE Thomas Rickard
Wisconsin	TE	2027	RE James Hayes

MANUAL OF OPERATIONS

NOMINATING COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCTION

- A. The *Book of Church Order (BCO)* of the Presbyterian Church in America has established the guiding principles for the formation of committees within the denomination. These principles appear in Chapter 14 concerning the structure of the General Assembly, as follows:

BCO 14-1

7. *The Assembly's committees are to serve and not to direct any Church judicatories. They are not to establish policy, but rather execute policy established by the General Assembly.*
8. *The committees serve the Church through the duties assigned by the General Assembly.*
9. *The Assembly's committees are to include proportionate representation of all presbyteries, wherever possible.*
10. *The committees are to be established on the basis of an equal number between teaching and ruling elders.*

These principles are based upon the PCA's commitment to be a 'grass roots' denomination, with leadership rising from the bottom up, rather than modeling a hierarchical, top-down form of leadership. Included within these principles is the important concept that committees should not be self-perpetuating, but that the General Assembly should elect its own leadership. This flows from the clear Biblical teaching of verses such as:

- a. *Deuteronomy 1:9-13 (NIV) "At that time I said to you, 'You are too heavy a burden for me to carry alone. The Lord your God has increased your numbers so that today you are as many as the stars in the sky. May the Lord, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousand times and bless you as he has promised! But how can I bear your problems and your burdens and your disputes all by myself? Choose some wise, understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you.'"*
- b. *Acts 6:2-3 (NIV) "So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them...'"*

- B. In order to assist the General Assembly in determining who might be the best qualified men to perform the duties required of the various committees and boards, a Nominating Committee, consisting of members elected directly by the Presbyteries, has been established. The duties of this Committee are set forth as follows:

BCO 14-1

11. *A Nominating Committee shall be comprised of one representative elected by each Presbytery in the following manner. Each Presbytery shall be assigned to a class by the stated clerk based on its date of formation. The members shall serve in classes of three-year terms, alternating between ruling and teaching elders. When necessary, unexpired terms shall be filled by an elder of the same class, teaching or ruling.*

This committee is to present all nominations for which it is responsible to the next meeting of the Assembly from a slate of men nominated by the Presbyteries. Presbyteries shall utilize the nominating forms provided by the stated clerk for their nominations. Each presbytery may present one teaching elder and one ruling elder for each committee or agency.

In addition to nominees for expired terms, the Committee shall nominate for each permanent committee one ruling and one teaching elder as alternates to fill any vacancies that may occur during the year. Each alternate should attend each meeting and fill any vacancy necessary to meet a quorum. In addition to the new nominees from the Presbyteries, alternates not assuming any vacancies during a year will be automatically considered by the Nominating Committee as candidates for nomination to that same committee.

- C. Based on these principles and guidelines, and because of the built-in turnover in the makeup of this group, the Nominating Committee of the General Assembly has adopted the following Manual of Operations to assist with the orderly conduct of its business.

PART I: PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE (NC)

A. **PURPOSE:** To glorify Christ by:

1. Helping the General Assembly nominations process to be orderly (1 Cor 14:40). To that end the NC will regularly:
 - a. Review and refine the operating procedures in accordance with General Assembly policies.
 - b. Report to the General Assembly any changes to committee procedures, including any changes to this manual.
2. Presenting a report of a list of the most qualified candidates as nominees for possible election by the General Assembly each year. Committee will also report the number of eligible TEs, REs, and Deacons that were nominated that year by presbyteries for each committee. In developing this list the NC will consider:
 - a. The qualifications of each candidate recommended by the Presbyteries
 - b. The needs of the individual committees, agencies and commissions
 - c. A proportionate representation of all Presbyteries, wherever possible (*BCO* 14-1.9)

B. **DUTIES OF THE MEMBERS:**

1. Prayerful consideration of the nominations process and the nominees beginning with receipt of assembled copies of all nominating forms and ending when elections are completed at each General Assembly.
2. Attendance at ALL meetings of the NC (including the Spring Stated Meeting and the General Assembly Stated Meeting). Members will bring their materials to both meetings.

3. Participation in the process, including:
 - a. Prompt submission of preliminary votes prior to the Spring Stated Meeting (see II.A.5, pg. B-36), if unable to attend.
 - b. Participation in discussion at both sub-committee and full NC meetings.
 - c. Encouraging and instructing their sending Presbyteries to be faithful in developing and recruiting leaders from among their members and in presenting names for possible nomination to the NC in a timely and proper manner.
 - d. Serving as liaison between the NC and the Presbyteries.

C. DUTIES OF OFFICERS: There shall be two officers of the NC:

1. Chairman. His duties shall be:
 - a. Prepare an agenda for and conduct the meetings of the NC.
 - b. Work with the Stated Clerk to accomplish necessary administrative activities.
 - c. Appoint all sub-committee Chairmen and ad-hoc committee members, when needed.
 - d. Communicate to the General Assembly on behalf of the committee.
2. Secretary. His duties shall be:
 - a. To keep an accurate record of minutes of all NC meetings.
 - b. Subject to approval by the Chairman, prepare brief biographical summaries for both committee nominees and floor nominees for the committee's report to General Assembly.
 - c. In the event the Chairman is unable to serve at any given meeting, to act as a convener and conduct the election of a Chairman pro-tem.
 - d. If the Secretary is unable to serve, the Committee will elect a replacement as needed.

D. DUTIES OF THE OFFICE OF STATED CLERK:

1. Provide secretarial and record keeping for the NC.
2. Handle the planning and payment of travel, housing, and meeting facility needs for the Spring Stated Meeting. It is understood that expenses to attend the General Assembly Stated Meeting are to be borne by the sending church/agency/presbytery of the NC member.

3. Refer all procedural or policy questions about NC procedures not covered by this manual to the Chairman for appropriate action.
4. Provide all materials needed by the Presbyteries to meet the requirements of the NC annually through the *Handbook for Presbytery Clerks*.
5. Prepare a tabulation form, in consultation with the officers of the NC, on which to tally the preliminary votes of the members of the NC. (See II.B.2, pg. B-38)
6. Advise the Presbyteries that current Alternates on Boards and Committees will be considered automatically by the Nominating Committee as candidates to that same Committee (per *BCO* 14-1, 11) and that the original biographical form will be applied. An alternate must inform the Stated Clerk of his Presbytery and concurrently the GA Stated Clerk if he does not desire to be considered as a nominee in the coming year.
7. Assemble the materials to include:
 - a. Agenda for Spring Stated Meeting
 - b. Extracts from *BCO*, *RAO*, and Bylaws relative to the NC
 - c. List of ineligible members for nominations
 - d. Distribution of committee/boards by presbytery representation
 - e. Spreadsheet of committee/boards by presbytery representation class
 - f. List showing current NC members by class and presbytery, and class needed to elect
 - g. Qualifications, responsibilities and/or job descriptions provided by each committee and board
 - h. Presbytery Nominee Biographical Form and letter of recommendation (on one page, one side for each) from nominees approved by each presbytery and eligible alternates' forms
 - i. Communications from all committees and agencies authorized to communicate directly with the NC
 - j. The Nomination Committee *Manual of Operations*
8. Immediately following the spring meeting of the NC, notify the men who have been nominated by the committee.

PART II: THE NOMINATING PROCESS

- A. Timetable for all events in the nominating process are set in order to meet deadlines for mailing of the *Commissioners Handbook* prior to each General Assembly and will be as follows (see attached chart):
 1. August 31 PCA Stated Clerk sends Nominations Package to the Presbytery Stated Clerks and members of the NC
 2. Fall Presbytery meetings Presbyteries are strongly encouraged to choose nominees at a meeting in the fall of the year.
 3. 4 Months prior to GA a. Presbytery Nominees Biographical Forms must be received by the PCA Stated Clerk's office. No forms will be accepted after this date (see *RAO* 8-4.e).

- b. Names of members of the NC submitted by Presbytery Stated Clerks
 - c. Deadline for receipt by the Chairman of the NC of communications from all committees and agencies authorized to communicate directly with the NC. These communications will be included in the materials for consideration by all members of the NC in their preliminary voting.
- 4. 1st Business Day of March Office of the PCA Stated Clerk mails materials to all members of the NC.
- 5. 5 pm EST Friday prior to Spring Stated Meeting of the NC Preliminary vote forms from members of the NC who are unable to attend the Spring Stated Meeting due at Office of PCA Stated Clerk.
- 6. 4th Saturday of March Spring Stated Meeting of the NC
- 7. 2nd Saturday of April NC final report, including biographical summaries, due at Office of PCA Stated Clerk
- 8. Mid-May (approximately) GA *Commissioner's Handbooks* mailed
- 9. Mid-June (approximately) Meeting of the General Assembly
- 10. After Close of Floor Nominations at GA General Assembly Stated Meeting of NC

B. Forms to be used in the Nominating Process

1. Presbytery Nominee Biographical Form for General Assembly.
This form will consist of two sides. The first side will include all instructions concerning submission of the form and a place for the Presbytery Stated Clerk or a designated representative of Presbytery to sign, authenticating that the individual named in the form was approved by vote of his Presbytery and the date that action occurred. This page may be hand printed. It is then given to the nominee. When submitted to the Office of the PCA Stated Clerk, it will remain in their files and be used if the nominee is ultimately elected to a Board, Committee or Commission.

The reverse side will include at the top an area for the identification of the nominee. The remainder of the page is to be used by the nominee to include any information he would like the NC to consider in his behalf, including (but not limited to) past/present service on Presbytery and GA committees; education; vocational experience; and other pertinent information. A copy of this page will become a part of the packet that is sent to every member of the NC. This form will be designed and periodically revised by the NC after consulting with the Office of the PCA Stated Clerk. The following requirements for this second page will be stressed in the instructions:

- a. On this page Section D MUST be typed or computer printed, with a minimum of one-inch margins and 10-point type size. Handwritten/printed copies will not be accepted.

- b. This page is to be just that - ONE PAGE. If more than one page is submitted to the Office of the Stated Clerk, only the first page of that submission will be included in the meeting materials.

Each nominee is encouraged to obtain a letter of recommendation from any elder (Teaching or Ruling) in the PCA, who can attest in the letter that he knows the nominee and has observed his demeanor and work, provided that the letter writer may not provide recommendations for more than three (3) men being considered by the NC in any one year. The nominee is responsible for ensuring that the letter of recommendation he submits complies with this three-letter-maximum rule. If it does not, all letters written by that elder shall be removed from the materials before they are sent to the NC.

Updated March 2025

This recommendation is limited to one page and must be typed. It must be submitted to the Office of the PCA Stated Clerk along with the nomination form. When the members of the NC receive the materials, the letter of recommendation will be copied on the back of the Nominee Biographical Form.

- 2. The following instructions apply to the entire submission of the forms listed above:
 - a. The nominee is responsible to email or file online his submission to the Office of the PCA Stated Clerk.

Updated March 2025
 - b. The Biographical Form and letter of recommendation must be submitted together. The Office of the PCA Stated Clerk will not be responsible for forms that arrive separately.

Updated March 2025
 - c. The forms must be emailed or filed online by the deadline date printed in Section B. LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED BY THE NC.
- 3. NC Preliminary Vote Forms. A form will be designed each year by the Office of the PCA Stated Clerk, in consultation with the officers of the NC, on which to tally the preliminary votes of the members of the NC. This preliminary vote tally will show the raw numbers of votes per place (e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.). This preliminary vote tally will be used to set the initial motion for each committee and agency at the in-person meeting according to highest total raw votes for candidates in preliminary voting.

Updated June 2025

PART III: SPRING STATED MEETING OF THE NC

- A. Time and place: This meeting will normally be held on the 4th Saturday of March (with adjustments made so as not to conflict with Easter weekend). Any change in date will be determined by vote at the previous Spring Stated meeting. The meeting will normally be held from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at a hotel/conference center near the Atlanta Airport, thus allowing for same-day fly in and fly out by many members.

B. Items of business will include:

1. Making recommendations for nominees for each of the GA Boards, Committees, and Commissions.

The aggregated preliminary vote forms received from the members of the NC shall constitute the initial list of recommendations of the NC as the main motion. The NC will evaluate the candidate qualifications as a committee to form the final list of candidates. NC members may move to substitute another candidate for any on the main motion. No more than one substitution at a time may be offered. Each substitution shall thereafter be voted on individually.

March 23, 2024

2. Making recommendations on any other business referred to the NC from the General Assembly, such as Overtures.
3. Making recommendations for changes to the Manual of Operations, when needed.
4. At the close of the meeting, electing a Chairman and Secretary for the following year (seeking to rotate the offices between Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders whenever possible).

PART IV: GENERAL ASSEMBLY STATED MEETING

- A. Time and Place: This meeting will be held after the close of floor nominations at the General Assembly each year, at a time and meeting room to be announced by the Chairman. Members of the NC in attendance at the General Assembly are responsible to watch the announcements for the call to the meeting.

B. Items of Business will include:

1. Respond to any new vacancies not identified at the time of the Spring Stated Meeting. NC nominees for these vacancies will be made from names which had been submitted by the Presbyteries for the Spring Stated Meeting. (It is important that all members of the NC bring their materials to the General Assembly and to the meeting for this purpose.)
2. Review all floor nominations for eligibility and approve them for submission to the General Assembly. The Committee shall elect a sub-committee to include the Chairman, Secretary, and at least two at-large members to prepare Biographical Summaries for the floor nominees that the committee certifies as eligible for nomination for inclusion in the Committee's Supplemental Report. The sub-committee shall prepare the Biographical summaries of floor nominees, employing the same standards and care used in the preparation of Biographical Summaries of committee nominations.
3. Making recommendations on any other business referred to the NC from the General Assembly up to this time.
4. The Chairman and Secretary, with support from the Office of the Stated Clerk, will prepare the supplemental report to the General Assembly.

5. All floor nomination forms timely received by the floor clerks shall be delivered to the Office of the Stated Clerk immediately following the deadline for floor nominations (*RAO* 8-4 i). The Office of the Stated Clerk shall retain the original forms and the staff will make copies for use by the Chairman, Secretary, and subcommittee which prepares the Biographical Summaries. The original and one copy of each floor nomination form shall be kept by the Office of the Stated Clerk for at least two years.

6. After the chairman has approved the Biographical Summaries of all floor nominees (Manual of Operations of the Nominating Committee, Section I.C.2.b), the Supplemental Report shall be delivered to the Stated Clerk's Office for publication and distribution to the Assembly.

PART V: AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL

This manual may be amended by a majority vote of those attending any meeting of the NC. The Amendments must be submitted in writing in advance of the vote, giving members of the NC at least two weeks to consider possible changes. The NC will report to the General Assembly any changes to this manual.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF REVIEW OF PRESBYTERY RECORDS (RPR) COMMITTEE

The fiftieth General Assembly amended the Rules of Assembly Operations, which includes the composition and responsibilities of the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records. The pertinent rules are as follows:

RAO 8-5(a) sets the membership of the committee following the formula used for Nominating Committee. [See formula on page 054.]

ARTICLE XVI. REVIEW OF PRESBYTERY RECORDS

16-1. It is the right and duty of the General Assembly to review, at least once a year, the records of the presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* 40-1 and 2).

16-2. General Assembly carries out this review through its Committee on Review of Presbytery Records. The operation of this committee shall be considered a General Assembly expense.

16-3. Guidelines for Keeping Presbytery Minutes

- a. The stated clerk of each presbytery is responsible for the custody of the minutes of presbytery.
- b. The minutes should be neat and legible. Minutes should be dated, and the pages numbered. An official copy of the minutes should be printed and either bound or kept in a good binder.
- c. The minutes should contain the following information:
 - 1) The kind of meeting: stated, called, adjourned stated, or adjourned called. In the case of a called meeting the portion of the call stating the purpose of the meeting should be recorded verbatim in the minutes.
 - 2) The name of the presbytery.
 - 3) The date, time and place of the meeting.
 - 4) The name of the moderator, and if someone other than the regular stated clerk served as a clerk pro-tem, his name should be indicated.
 - 5) That sessions were opened and closed with prayer (*BCO* 10-5).
 - 6) The names of those present at the meeting, indicating whether they were teaching elders, or ruling elders and the church they represented. The names of alternate ruling elders and their respective churches should also be included, and the names of visitors may be included.
 - 7) Teaching elders not attending and churches not represented should be listed as excused or unexcused.
 - 8) Approval of current or previous minutes.
- d. The minutes should be signed by the clerk.
- e. Additional guidelines:
 - 1) Points of order ruled against by the chair and appeals from the decision of the chair, whether sustained or lost, together with the reason given by the chair for

his ruling, should be included for the sake of any case that may be carried to a higher court and for the protection of a minority. The record of the presbytery's actions should be recorded.

- 2) When a count has been ordered, or the vote is by ballot, the number of votes on each side should be entered.
- 3) The proceedings of a committee of the whole should not be entered in the minutes, but the fact that the assembly went into the committee as a whole. The committee report should be recorded.
- 4) When a commission is charged with carrying out a task prescribed in the Constitution (such as organizing a church or ordaining or installing a teaching elder), the minutes of presbytery should reflect the completion of each action prescribed in the respective constitutional provision. This may be accomplished by reporting the work of the commission using a form provided by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, which should be included in or appended to the minutes.
- 5) Minutes of presbytery relating to examinations must list all specific requirements and trials for licensure and/or ordination which have been accomplished, including that each candidate being examined for ordination was required to "state the specific instances in which he may differ with the *Confession of Faith* and Catechisms in any of their statements and/or propositions" (*BCO* 19-2; 21-4). This does not mean that a separate vote on each item must be recorded. Presbytery minutes shall record ministers' and ministerial candidates' stated differences with our Standards in their own words. Each presbytery shall also record whether:
 - a) the candidate stated that he had no differences; or
 - b) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be merely semantic; or
 - c) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be more than semantic, but "not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine" (*BCO* 19-2; 21-4); or
 - d) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be "out of accord," that is, "hostile to the system" or "strik[ing] at the vitals of religion" (*BCO* 19-2; 21-4).6)
- 6) Minutes of presbytery relating to ministerial calls shall record that the specific arrangements (*BCO* 20-1, and *BCO* 8-7 as applicable) of the call were found to be in order. The call document need not be attached to the minutes.
- 7) Minutes of executive sessions are not exempt from the general requirement that presbytery's actions shall be recorded in the presbytery's minutes and that these minutes (even if kept in a separate section on executive sessions) shall be submitted to the General Assembly for review (*BCO* 13-11; 14-6.c; 40-1). Presbytery may ask that the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records deal with these minutes confidentially. However, any exceptions to these minutes must be submitted to the General Assembly through the normal procedures.
- 8) Minutes of presbytery dealing with judicial cases shall not be dealt with by Committee on Review of Presbytery Records when notice of appeal or complaint has been given the lower court (*BCO* 40-3). Nevertheless, minutes of judicial cases must always be submitted as part of the record of presbytery.

- f. The following suggestions are made to clerks and presbyteries for the keeping of minutes:
 - 1) The minutes should record the actions of the presbytery, including all motions adopted and business transacted, together with such additional information as the presbytery deems desirable for historical purposes.
 - 2) Ordinarily in church courts, motions that are lost are not included in the record, unless an affirmative vote for the lost motion is recorded, in which case the lost motion must be shown.
 - 3) Each main motion should normally be recorded in a separate paragraph. Subsidiary and procedural motions may be recorded in the same paragraph with the main motion to which it pertains.

16-4. Guidelines for Submitting of Presbytery Records:

- a. The stated clerk of each presbytery is to provide the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly with copies of all minutes to be reviewed, in one of two formats: (1) four bound, paginated hard-copies or (2) two bound, paginated hard-copies and one paginated digital copy (preferably as a single document).
- b. The minutes to be reviewed shall include the unreviewed minutes of all presbytery meetings that have been held through the end of the previous calendar year (*BCO* 40-1).
- c. In addition to the minutes themselves, the presbytery shall submit a corresponding number of copies, in accordance with 16-4.a. of the following items:
 - 1) A current Directory of Presbytery, including (1) a list of all teaching elders, with their addresses and their status; and of all churches and missions with the address of the church, and the name and address of the Clerk of Session, (2) a listing of all officers and committee members of the regular committees of presbytery, and (3) a list identifying all candidates under care, interns, and licentiates of the presbytery with their addresses and their status.
 - 2) An up-to-date copy of the Standing Rules of the presbytery.
 - 3) A letter stating presbytery's response to the Assembly concerning disposition of any exceptions of substance taken by the past Assembly.
- d. The minutes are to be reviewed and the items listed under 16-4.c shall be mailed to the office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly by March 15 each year.
- e. If a presbytery repeatedly fails to submit its minutes, or its responses to exceptions of substance, the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records may recommend to the General Assembly that the provisions of *BCO* 40-1, 4, & 5 be applied.

- 16-5.** The stated clerk of each presbytery, or his representative, should be prepared to meet with the committee to answer questions and to clarify any possible discrepancy. The committee should make every reasonable effort to consult with the clerk of the presbytery (or his designee) on any questions before finalizing the report to the General Assembly.

16-6. Guidelines for Examining Presbytery Records:

- a. Presbytery minutes shall be examined for conformity to:

- 1) The Scriptures and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America as to the substance of the actions recorded (*BCO* 40-2), and
- 2) The Assembly Guidelines for Keeping Presbytery Minutes, as to form, structure, and minimum content (*RAO* 16-3).
- b. Each set of presbytery minutes and other materials submitted under *RAO* 16-4c should be read by at least two members of the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records.
- c. The findings of the committee with respect to the minutes of each presbytery shall be noted under the following categories as appropriate:
 - 1) Exceptions of substance: Apparent violations of the Scripture or serious irregularities from the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, actions out of accord with the deliverances of the General Assembly, and matters of impropriety and important delinquencies, and any non-compliance with *RAO* 16-3.e.5 should be reported under this category.
 - 2) Exceptions of form: Violations of the Assembly's Guidelines for Keeping Presbytery Minutes (*RAO* 16-3), rules of order, should normally be reported under this category. When a minor irregularity from a *BCO* provision or requirement is noted, it may be treated as an exception of form (*BCO* 40-3). If subsequent minutes continue to reflect the same particular exception of form, it may become an exception of substance.
 - 3) Notations: The committee may report to the clerk of presbytery any typographical errors, misspellings, improper punctuation and other minor variations in form and clarity. These are to be given as advice for the respective clerks.

16-7. Guidelines for Reporting on Presbytery Records: The report of the committee shall be concise. It shall include the following:

- a. A list of the minutes, by presbyteries, received by the committee.
- b. A list of the presbyteries which have not submitted minutes, if any.
- c. A recommendation concerning the minutes of each presbytery, which shall include:
 - 1) Minutes approved without exception;
 - 2) Minutes approved with exceptions of form, which shall be reported directly to the presbytery;
 - 3) Minutes approved with exceptions of substance which shall be presented to the General Assembly, which presentation shall include citation of any relevant scriptural and/or constitutional references, and provide the committee's rationale for finding the exception of substance;
 - 4) Responses to exceptions of previous Assemblies, if any;
 - 5) Recommendations concerning all responses to exceptions taken by previous Assemblies that have not been disposed of suitably.
- d. Any other recommendation to the Assembly.
- e. A statement of the division of the vote on each recommendation.
- f. Any recommendation which may affect the budget of the Assembly shall be referred to the Committee of Commissioners on Administrative Committee.
- g. A list of members present.
- h. Minority Reports
 - 1) With respect to any recommendation, prior to a recess or adjournment of the Review of Presbytery Records Committee following the adoption of

said recommendations, any member of the committee may indicate an intention to file a minority report by giving notice to the chairman.

- 2) The minority report, from at least six (6) members of the committee, must be filed with the chairman of the committee and the office of the Stated Clerk of General Assembly not more than seven (7) days after the adjournment of the RPR Committee meeting.

16-8. The report of the committee shall be prepared and handled in the same manner as reports of committees of commissioners as set forth in *RAO* 14-8. Neither the report of the committee nor the General Assembly's approval or disapproval of this report establishes doctrinal precedent.

16-9. No partial report of the committee shall be presented without the consent of the Assembly.

16-10. Guidelines for Responding to General Assembly

- a. Presbyteries shall be advised of exceptions of form; however, they shall take note in their minutes of exceptions of substance taken by the Assembly, together with their responses adopted by the presbytery to these exceptions. These responses should normally be adopted by Presbytery in the same calendar year as the exceptions were taken by the Assembly. Regardless, responses must be filed in accordance with *RAO* 16-4.d.
- b. Presbyteries shall correspond with the next General Assembly the disposition they have made of the exceptions of substance (including general), with specific reference to presbytery's action as recorded in its minutes. Responses shall be in one of the following forms:
 - 1) Presbytery agrees with the exceptions and corrects its record (if possible), corrects its actions (if possible) and promises to be more careful in the future.
Or,
 - 2) Presbytery respectfully disagrees with the exception, states its grounds and refers the exception back to the Assembly.
- c. If, in responding to an exception of substance, a presbytery reports that it disagrees with the conclusion of the Assembly and/or has not corrected or redressed the identified problem; and, the committee (after reviewing the presbytery's response and rationale, and, if a majority so desires, consulting with the Committee on Constitutional Business) continues to believe that the presbytery has persisted in an error that is significant enough to require an Assembly response; then, the committee shall notify the Assembly of the continuing exception, and shall make recommendation as to whether the Assembly should again seek a more acceptable response from the presbytery, or should appoint a representative to present its case and refer the matter to the Standing Judicial Commission to cite the presbytery to appear for proceedings according to *BCO* 40-5.

SUMMARY OF NOMINATIONS

Must be received by **February 23, 2026**

*NOTE: This form verifies the legitimacy of nominations sent in by candidates from your presbytery. Completion of this form alone does not place a candidate's name in consideration for nomination; a Nominee Biographical form must be e-mailed to **hharrison@pcanet.org** or received by the PCA Stated Clerk's Office by the date above.*

Presbytery: _____ **Attested by:** _____
Stated Clerk of Presbytery/Nominations Chair

Each presbytery may nominate 2 men for each Committee and Agency.

Administrative Committee:

TE _____ RE _____

Committee on Discipleship Ministries (formerly Christian Education and Publications):

TE _____ RE _____

Committee on Constitutional Business:

TE _____ RE _____

Interchurch Relations Committee:

TE _____ RE _____

Mission to North America:

TE _____ RE _____

Mission to the World:

TE _____ RE _____

Reformed University Fellowship:

TE _____ RE _____

Standing Judicial Commission:

TE _____ RE _____

Theological Examining Committee:

TE _____ RE _____

The following boards need not be divided between TE and RE. Deacons may be nominated to the Geneva Board and to the PCA Foundation Board. Please designate what office the nominee has.

Covenant College:

☐TE ☐RE _____ ☐TE ☐RE _____

Covenant Theological Seminary:

☐TE ☐RE _____ ☐TE ☐RE _____

PCA Foundation:

☐TE ☐RE ☐DE _____ ☐TE ☐RE ☐DE _____

Geneva Benefits, Inc.:

☐TE ☐RE ☐DE _____ ☐TE ☐RE ☐DE _____

Ridge Haven:

☐TE ☐RE _____ ☐TE ☐RE _____

Send to: Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, 1700 North Brown Road, Suite 105, Lawrenceville, GA, 30043
 Or email: hharrison@pcanet.org

PRESBYTERY NOMINEE BIOGRAPHICAL FORM

MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE PCA STATED CLERK BY FEBRUARY 23, 2026

Late forms will not be accepted.

INSTRUCTIONS (failure to follow these guidelines will disqualify your nomination):

- Completely fill out all sections
- Sections A and B do not have to be typed, but any printing must be neat. Section C must be typed.
- You are encouraged (but not required) to include a letter of recommendation, **from any Teaching or Ruling Elder in your Presbytery**. The letter must be limited to one page.
- Nominee completes form and returns to PCA Stated Clerk:
 - **Online:** <https://forms.gle/w49H5ihAtxomdkZ5A>
 - **Email:** hharrison@pcanet.org
 - **Mail:** PCA Stated Clerk, 1700 North Brown Road, Suite 105, Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143 (If mailing, please allow time for the form to be shipped. Late forms will not be accepted, and the form must be **received** by the deadline.)
- Your presbytery clerk must also send in a separate form confirming your nomination.

****The Nominee is responsible to ensure the form is received by the PCA Stated Clerk by the deadline.****

SECTION A: Nominee Info

Nominee: ☐TE ☐RE ☐Deacon Full Name: _____

“Goes by” name he would prefer to be called: _____

Committee for which he is nominated: _____

Presbytery: _____ **Date approved by Presbytery:** _____

Presbytery Contact: _____

Stated Clerk or Presbytery Nominations Representative

Nominee’s address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Mobile phone _____ **Work phone** _____

E-Mail _____

SECTION B

Committee/Agency _____ ☐TE ☐RE ☐DE Name _____

Presbytery _____ Occupation _____

Nominee’s Church and City _____

SECTION C

This section must be typed. Include any information you wish the Nominating Committee to consider, including (but not limited to) past and present service on presbytery and GA committees, education, vocational experience, and other pertinent information. This page is copied and distributed (along with your one-page letter of recommendation **from an elder in your presbytery** if you have provided one) to the Nominating Committee members. No additional material will be provided. **Your entire bio needs to fit in the space below (no attachments).**

ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES AND AGENCIES

I. Types of General Assembly Committees and Agencies

Permanent Committees (BCO 14-1,12, RAO 4-2, “PCA Corporate Bylaws” V-G.). [Elected by the Assembly]

- Administrative Committee (AC)
- Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM)
- Mission to the World (MTW)
- Mission to North America (MNA)
- Reformed University Ministries (RUM)

Agencies (RAO 4-3, “PCA Corporate Bylaws” V-G.). [Elected by the Assembly]

- Covenant Theological Seminary (CTS)
- Covenant College (CC)
- PCA Foundation (PCAF)
- Ridge Haven Conference Center (RH)
- Geneva Benefits

Special Committees (RAO 4-4)

- Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) [Elected by the General Assembly]
- Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB) [Elected by the General Assembly]
- Theological Examining Committee (TEC) [Elected by the General Assembly]
- Nominating Committee (NC) [RAO 8-4, BCO 14-1,11. Elected by Presbyteries assigned to a class by Stated Clerk based on date of formation of Presbytery]
- Committee on Review of Presbytery Records (RPR) [RAO 8-5, BCO 14-1,11. Elected by Presbyteries assigned to a class by Stated Clerk based on date of formation of Presbytery].

Committees of Commissioners (RAO 14-2) [Elected by Presbyteries according to formula established by the Stated Clerk]

Ad Interim Committees (RAO Article IX) [Appointed by Moderator or elected by the General Assembly]

II. Standing Judicial Commission

The SJC is unique. It is not a BCO 14-1, 12 permanent committee or agency of the General Assembly. It is not an RAO 4-4 special committee. It is not a sub-committee of the Administrative Committee but is funded by the AC (RAO 17-1). It is a standing commission of the General Assembly, directly elected by the Assembly (BCO 15-4).

III. Exclusions

RAO 8-4, i. “The nominee is to give consent to only one nomination.” [Note: this is contrary to Robert’s Rules of Order, Ch. XIV, § 46, Tenth edition, p 418, ll. 13-17. However, the RAO is of higher parliamentary authority than RRO].

BCO 15-4. “No person may serve concurrently on the General Assembly's Standing Judicial Commission and any of the General Assembly's permanent committees.”

BCO 14-1, 12. "Persons who have served for a full term, or for at least two years of a partial term, on one of the Assembly's permanent committees or agencies shall not be eligible for re-election to an Assembly committee until one year has elapsed. (Exceptions may be permitted in agency bylaws approved by the Assembly)."

RAO 4-6. "No individual shall serve on more than one Assembly committee, or agency at one time, except those who serve as permanent committee representatives on the Administrative Committee of General Assembly and those who serve on Ad Interim Committees."

RAO 4-7. "Employees of the Assembly's committees or agencies are not eligible for office on an Assembly's committee or agency which administers matters directly related to their area of employment."

RAO 14-2. "Each presbytery shall, prior to the meeting of the Assembly, elect one of its commissioners to each of these committees of commissioners (cf. 14-1), dividing them as to ruling and teaching elders by a formula established by the Stated Clerk. In the event that presbytery does not have sufficient teaching elders to supply the committees thus assigned, the presbytery may, at its own discretion, elect ruling elders to these committees (or vice versa, may elect teaching elders for insufficient ruling elders)... Commissioners serving on permanent Committees or Agencies or sub-committees of the Assembly or the staffs thereof are not eligible to serve on any of these committees of commissioners. For the purpose of defining those ineligible for service in committees of commissioners, permanent Committee or Agency "staff" is to be understood as persons required to be examined by the Theological Examining Committee (BCO 14-1.12.) and all permanent RULES OF ASSEMBLY OPERATIONS Committee and Agency support personnel. All commissioners should bear in mind Robert's Rules of Order regarding abstaining from voting on a question of direct personal interest (RONR (12th ed.) § 45:4-5)."

RAO 4-5. "The membership of committees or agencies shall be limited to the same constitutional provisions (BCO 14-1, 12) as those of the permanent committees: namely, that those who have served for at least a full term, or at least two years of a partial term on one of the Assembly's permanent committees or agencies shall not be eligible for reelection to an Assembly committee or agency until one year has elapsed, unless provision has been approved by the agency Bylaws. Nominations shall be handled according to the BCO 14-1, 11. These provisions shall not apply to Ad Interim committees, study committees or other committees appointed."

IV. Specified Permission

Sub-Committees of Permanent Committees may include non-elected members

RAO 4-10, a. "Membership of subcommittees may include persons not elected to the permanent committee, provided the subcommittee chairman is a permanent committee member."

Permanent or Special Committee Members May Serve on Review of Presbytery Records

RAO 8-5 a. The Committee on Review of Presbytery Records shall be comprised of one representative from each presbytery elected by the Presbytery in the manner set forth in BCO 14-1, 11 for the election of the Nominating Committee. A person who is serving as a member of or on the staff of one of the permanent or special committees, or boards of the General Assembly shall be eligible to serve on this committee.

V. Length of Terms

Three-year Terms

IRC (RAO 8-1)
 NC (BCO 14-1, 11)
 TEC (BCO 14-1, 14)
 RPR (RAO 8-5, BCO 14-1, 11)

Four-year Terms

AC (BCO 14-1, 12)
 CC ("PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-2)
 CCB (RAO 8-2)
 CTS ("PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-3)
 GENEVA ("PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-1)
 PCAF ("PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-5)
 SJC (BCO 15-4)

Five-Year Terms

CDM (BCO 14-1, 12)
 MNA (BCO 14-1, 12)
 MTW (BCO 14-1, 12)
 RUM (BCO 14-1, 12)
 RH ("PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-4)

VI. Immediate Re-election or Successive Terms

Interchurch Relations Committee (Two consecutive three-year terms)

RAO 8-1. There shall be an Interchurch Relations Committee composed of three teaching elders and three ruling elders who may serve two consecutive, three-year terms of office. There shall be a ruling elder and a teaching elder to serve as alternates.

Geneva (Two consecutive four-year terms)

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-1. Trustees shall be eligible for re-election to a second four-year term after which there must be a one-year interval before further re-election.

Geneva's Corporate Bylaws (3.05) were amended in 2010 to define a partial term to be less than 36 months (3 years), instead of the 2 years prescribed in the BCO (14-1.12).

CC (Two consecutive four-year terms)

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-2. A Trustee shall be eligible at the end of any full four-year term for re-election to a second four-year term, after which there must be a one-year interval before re-election.

CTS (Two consecutive four-year terms)

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-3. A Trustee shall be eligible at the end of any full four-year term for re-election to a second four-year term, after which there must be a one-year interval before re-election.

RH (Two consecutive four-year terms)

"PCA Corporate Bylaws" VI-4. Directors shall be eligible for reelection to a second five-year term after which there must be a one year interval before further reelection.

PCAF (Two consecutive four-year terms)

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-5. Directors shall be eligible for reelection to a second four-year term after which there must be a one-year interval before further election.

PCAF’s Corporate Bylaws state that RAO 4-5 does not apply to them; thus, men who would otherwise be required to take a sabbatical leave from committee service may serve on PCAF. M29GA, p. 154.

Standing Judicial Commission

There is no statement in the BCO or RAO requiring a year off after serving a term or prohibiting successive terms.

VII. Resignations

RAO 8-4, k. “In the event of the resignation of any member of an Assembly elected committee or agency, such resignation should be presented to the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk, shall, after consultation with the Chairman of the respective committee or board, be authorized to accept such resignation on behalf of the Assembly. He is to report such actions to the next General Assembly, and arrange for the nomination of a replacement by the Assembly's Nominating Committee, where such replacement is appropriate.”

VIII. Recommendation of Candidates by Agencies

GENEVA

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-1. The Board may make requests to the Presbyteries to nominate specific men to the Board and may submit to the General Assembly Nominating Committee letters of recommendation concerning particular nominees from the Presbyteries.

CC

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-2. In addition, the Board may make requests to the Presbyteries to nominate specific men to the Board and may submit to the Assembly Nominating Committee letters of recommendation concerning particular nominees from the presbyteries.

CTS

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-3. In addition, the Board may make requests to the Presbyteries to nominate specific men to the Board and may submit to the Assembly Nominating Committee letters of recommendation concerning particular nominees from the presbyteries.

RH

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-4. In addition, the Ridge Haven Board may make request to presbyteries to nominate specific men to the Board and may submit to the Assembly Nominating Committee letters of recommendation concerning particular nominees from presbyteries.

PCAF

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-5. As stated above, the Directors shall be elected through the standard nomination and election procedures, except that the Board of Directors may make requests to the Presbyteries to nominate specific men for election as Directors, and may submit to the Assembly Nominating Committee letters of recommendation concerning particular nominees for election as Directors from the Presbyteries.

IX. Geographical Distribution of Members

Recommended but not Absolutely Required for Committees and Agencies –

BCO 14-1, 9. “The Assembly's committees are to include proportionate representation of all presbyteries, wherever possible.”

RAO 8-4, b. The Nominating Committee should be reminded of paragraph BCO 14-1, 9 regarding proportionate representation wherever possible [emphasis added].

RAO 8-4, c. No presbytery shall ordinarily [emphasis added] be represented by more than one person nominated for any given Committee. This includes alternates.

Required for the Standing Judicial Commission -

BCO 15-4. “No person may be elected if there is already a member of the commission from the same Presbytery; but if a person is elected and changes Presbytery, he may continue to serve his full term. No person may serve concurrently on the General Assembly's Standing Judicial Commission and any of the General Assembly's permanent committees.”

Specifically Exempted

RH

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-4. The members of the Board of Directors of Ridge Haven are not subject to the BCO Chapter 14 relating to proportionate representation of all Presbyteries or for equal representation of Teaching and Ruling Elders.

X. Parity of Elders. Deacons, and Non-PCA Members Serving

Parity of Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders in Most Cases

BCO 14-1, 10. The committees are to be established on the basis of an equal number between teaching and ruling elders.

Parity of Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders not Required

GENEVA

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-1. The Trustees are not subject to the provisions of the BCO, Chapter 15 relating to proportionate representation of all Presbyteries or for equal representation of Teaching and Ruling Elders.

CC

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-2. There is no required formula for dividing the members of a class between teaching and ruling elders

CTS

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-3. There is no required formula for dividing the members of a class between teaching and ruling elders.

RH

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-4. The members of the Board of Directors of Ridge Haven are not subject to the BCO Chapter 14 relating to proportionate representation of all Presbyteries or for equal representation of Teaching and Ruling Elders.

PCAF

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-5. All members of the Board of Directors shall be either Teaching Elders, Ruling Elders or Deacons, and at least one-half of such members shall be Ruling Elders and Deacons.

Deacons Eligible

GENEVA

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-1. Each member of the Trustees must be either a Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder or Deacon in the Presbyterian Church in America.

PCAF

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-5. All of the members of the Board of Directors shall be either Teaching Elders, Ruling Elders or Deacons, and at least one-half of such members shall be Ruling Elders and Deacons.

Non-PCA members Allowed

CC

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-2. Up to four men of denominations with which the PCA is in ecclesiastical fellowship may be elected, one to each class. . . . Furthermore, the Board may recommend one nominee per class from another NAPARC member denomination for consideration by the Assembly Nominating Committee, with a maximum of two such members permitted on the Board at one time.

CTS

“PCA Corporate Bylaws” VI-3. Each Trustee shall be an ordained teaching or ruling elder of the Presbyterian Church in America and elected by the General Assembly, except that up to two members of each class may be elders of denominations with which the PCA is in ecclesiastical fellowship. . . . Furthermore, the Board may recommend one nominee per class from another NAPARC member denomination for consideration by the Assembly Nominating Committee, with a maximum of two such members permitted on the Board at one time.

XI. Automatic Nomination of Alternates to a Full Term

BCO 14-11, 11. (RAO 8-4, g.). “In addition to the new nominees from the Presbyteries, alternates not assuming any vacancies during a year will be automatically considered by the Nominating Committee as candidates for nomination to that same committee.”

XII. Partial Terms

General Regulations

BCO 14-1, 12. “Persons who have served for a full term, or for at least two years of a partial term, on one of the Assembly's permanent committees or agencies shall not be eligible for re-election to an Assembly committee until one year has elapsed. (Exceptions may be permitted in agency bylaws approved by the Assembly).”

RAO 4-5. “The membership of committees or agencies shall be limited to the same constitutional provisions (BCO 14-1, 12) as those of the permanent committees: namely, that those who have served for at least a full term, or at least two years of a partial term on one of the Assembly's permanent committees or agencies shall not be eligible for reelection to an Assembly committee or agency until one year has elapsed, unless provision has been approved by the agency Bylaws. Nominations shall be handled according to the BCO 14-1, 11. These provisions shall not apply to Ad Interim committees, study committees or other committees appointed.”

Exceptions

RH

“RH Bylaws”, V-3. Vacancies. A vacancy on the Board of Directors because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or otherwise, may be filled by the directors for the unexpired portion of the term subject to the approval of the next General Assembly.

GENEVA

“Geneva Corporate Bylaws”, “A director may serve two consecutive “full terms,” after which there must be a one-year interval before he may be re-elected. A term constituting less than thirty-six months, such as for a director elected to fill a vacancy, does not constitute a “full term” for the sake of the foregoing sentence. Therefore a director completing a “partial term” of less than thirty-six months may then be elected to two “full terms” thereafter prior to being required to spend at least one year off the board.”

Note: Term years conclude each year at the General Assembly’s close of business. The Class of 2005, for instance, ended its term on June 17, 2005.

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

EXPECTATIONS

1. They should be Teaching or Ruling Elders in good standing within the local church and presbytery. (*BCO* 14-1.10)
2. AC members should show evidence of love for Jesus Christ and His Word and the works of the General Assembly by prior service in a local church, at Presbytery level and/or on General Assembly level.
3. They should aspire to the office and be willing and able to commit to the necessary meetings required for the Administrative Committee business (demonstrated by their fulfillment of such requirements in previous offices or committee responsibilities). The AC meets three times a year (typically Fall, Spring and General Assembly). (*RAO* 4-13)
4. They should be willing to model and facilitate the peace, purity, and mission of the PCA and support the committee before the churches and presbyteries in word, deed, and financial commitment. (*RAO* 5-4)
5. They should have experience in some of the following: personnel management, accounting, insurance, investing, law, marketing, computer sciences/technologies, fund raising, and/or service as a stated clerk of a presbytery.
6. They should have wisdom and experience in setting policies, goals, and objectives, including financial budgeting, and in long-range planning.
7. They should complement the broad geographical diversity of the PCA insofar as possible. (*BCO* 14-1.9)

RESPONSIBILITIES

To serve a four-year term. (*BCO* 14-1.12; *RAO* 4-5; 5-2)

A. WITH REGARD TO PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT:

1. To recommend policies and oversee planning for the administration of AC operations. (*RAO* 3-1)
2. To recommend and oversee policies for the planning, and management of PCA administrative activities and efforts.
3. To initiate and approve long range planning.
4. To recommend and oversee policies for handling of civil and legal matters for the PCA Corporation and the Administrative Committee.
5. To review the compliance to General Assembly directives and corporation bylaws of Committees and Agencies actions and point out discrepancies.
6. Review Stated Clerk's work. (*RAO* 3-3.d)

7. To set policies for and approve General Assembly programs and registration fees. (*RAO* 10-3 through 5)
8. To set policies and oversee the local Assembly Arrangements Committee, including manual for General Assembly Arrangements. (*RAO* 3-2.m; 10-1)
9. To set policies and oversee special projects of service to the PCA constituency such as PCA Yearbook, and statistics.
10. To set policies and oversee the public relations work of the Stated Clerk and his office.
11. To address all matters relating to the *RAO*, manuals, and other matters referred to AC by the General Assembly.
12. To advise the Stated Clerk, as requested, in the referral of matters to the appropriate committees of the General Assembly.
13. To coordinate the Presbytery Clerks' Conference.
14. To oversee the conducting of civil matters which are properly handled by the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (A CORPORATION) according to the policies and directives of the General Assembly.
 "The business affairs of the Corporation, as distinguished from the ecclesiastical matters, shall be managed by the Board of Directors, which shall have such powers and duties as are set forth in the charter of the Corporation and the By-laws."
 Bylaws, Article III, Section 1.

B. WITH REGARD TO BUDGET AND FINANCE:

1. To recommend policies and oversee planning for the AC budget.
2. To review policies for personnel salaries.
3. To oversee the calculating and communicating of the GA PARTNERSHIP SHARE program. (*RAO* 4-11)
4. To oversee and participate in raising funds for AC operations. (*RAO* 5-4)
5. To receive and review the budgets of Assembly Committees and Agencies, to evaluate the proposed budget of each permanent committee and agency and report its considered opinion to the full AC on the adoption thereof. (*RAO* 4-11)
6. To recommend the auditing firm for the General Assembly Permanent Committees. (Bylaws Article VII Section 1)
7. To recommend policies and oversee the annual AC financial audit.

The AC normally meets in mid-April, at General Assembly, and in early October each year.

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

JOB SUMMARY:

Oversee and encourage the work of the Coordinator and staff of the permanent Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM) as they help churches fulfill the Great Commission among the children, youth, and adults in the congregation. Attend approximately two CDM meetings annually and oversee the policies and programs of CDM as they are implemented through the Coordinator;

SPECIFICALLY:

1. To attend stated meetings (usually in September and March), and any called meetings (usually electronic);
2. To set policy in accordance with the guidance and actions of the General Assembly;
3. To work with Coordinator in implementing the ministry of CDM;
4. To pray regularly for the CDM ministry and provide financial support as the Lord enables;
5. To support and promote CDM's ministry throughout the PCA, especially in the congregation and Presbytery;
6. To demonstrate a commitment and loyalty to the PCA that will encourage local churches to support the work of the Committees and Agencies of the denomination.

EXPECTATIONS:

1. A ruling or teaching elder who is committed to the PCA and actively serves in his local church;
2. Has a vision for local church discipleship that is based on God's Word and promotes relational connection in the covenant community (WCF 26);
3. Is knowledgeable in the areas of Christian Education, discipleship among children/youth/adults, and/or publishing, but not necessarily a "professional" in these areas;
4. A recognized servant leader in the local church and presbytery.

**EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL BUSINESS**

EXPECTATIONS:

1. A Ruling or Teaching Elder in good standing within the local church and presbytery. (*BCO* 14-1.10)
2. A man of spiritual maturity, wisdom and discernment. A man of consistent prayer.
3. One who has a good working knowledge of the Westminster Standards and especially the *Book of Church Order* and *Rules of Assembly Operations*.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Serve a four-year term. (*RAO* 4-5; 8-2.a)
2. Be available for two stated meetings (late April and at General Assembly).
3. Serve as advisor to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly upon his request between General Assemblies. (*RAO* 8-2.b.1)
4. Give advice on non-judicial references upon request. (*RAO* 8-2.b.2)
5. Advise General Assembly regarding the effect of any proposed amendment to the constitution. (*RAO* 8-2.b.3)
6. Advise the Overtures Committee on any constitutional inquiry submitted to it by the Overtures Committee. (*RAO* 8-2.b.4)
7. Report directly to General Assembly on all constitutional inquiries submitted to it by the GA. (*RAO* 8-2.b.5)

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES COVENANT COLLEGE

Qualifications

Per the Bylaws of Covenant College, the qualifications for Trustees are specified in Article VI, ¶ 2 of the [Corporate Bylaws of Presbyterian Church in America](#).

- Candidates must be those who possess a mature walk with the Lord Jesus Christ and commitment to His Word, meet the requirements established by the bylaws of the corporation as approved by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America.
- Candidates for the Board of Trustees should aspire to the office and be willing to commit to the necessary meetings required, as well as to promote the College in their normal activities. Trustees may be asked to work on special projects if their schedules permit.
- Trustees need to accept and understand thoroughly the importance of integration of faith and learning, the development of a Christian world-and-life view, and the sovereignty of God over all of life.
- Desirable experience for trustees would include the following: setting policies, goals, and objectives, familiarity with the challenges higher education institutions regularly face, setting and meeting financial budgets, and strategic long-range planning.
- Trustees must recognize the tremendous financial needs of the annual operating fund and capital campaigns and should be willing and able to help the College both personally and through their personal influence in these critical areas.
- Trustees must recognize the importance of enrollment and be willing and able to encourage prospective students to enroll in the institution by being familiar with various academic and student programs.
- Trustees should be individuals who know and understand the relationship of the various courts in the Presbyterian church and be strong advocates of Christian education and its relationship to evangelism, missions, church planting, and other aspects of the denomination.
- The overall Board of Trustees profile shall meet predetermined targets within the various criteria of presbytery/geographical representation, resources development, ethnic and cultural diversity, teaching and ruling elder mix, board experience, vocational experience, and unique gifting and expertise.

Corporate Responsibilities

The job of the Board is to preserve and advance the mission of the College and to secure the College's future. The Board's specific contributions are unique to its trusteeship role and necessary for proper governance and management. Per the Board Policies Manual (BPM) of Covenant College, Section 3.2 lists the corporate responsibilities of the Board as follows:

- Work with the College's senior administration to clarify mission, values, strategies, and major goals/outcomes for the College, and hold the President accountable for developing long-range plans based on these policies.

- In its policy-making role, determine the parameters within which the President is expected to achieve institutional goals/outcomes.
- Monitor the performance of the organization relative to the achievement of the goals/outcomes within the executive parameters.
- Maintain and constantly improve all on-going policies of the Board in this BPM.
- Select, fairly compensate, nurture, evaluate annually and, if necessary, terminate a President, who functions as the Board's sole agent.
- Ensure financial solvency and integrity through policies and behavior pertaining to budget review and approval, investment policy, fundraising, and facilities management.
- Require periodic financial and other external audits to ensure compliance with the law and good practices.
- Evaluate and constantly improve the Board's performance as the governing Board and set expectations for Trustees' involvement as volunteers.

Individual Responsibilities

Section 3.2 of the Board Policies Manual of Covenant College lists the Board of Trustees Profile for individual Board of Trustee members. Having committed oneself to Covenant's philosophy of a Christ-centered education and statement of purpose, a Trustee should make an earnest effort to enhance the Trustee's understanding and to improve the Trustee's ability to implement these principles in the actions performed and decisions made. Each Trustee should do the following:

- Pray regularly and faithfully for the College, not only broadly but for specific needs, with earnestness and importunity.
- Make the necessary effort to become knowledgeable about the major programs and needs of the College, giving particular attention to those in the area(s) of his committee responsibilities.
- Make a financial commitment to the College and encourage others to give,
- Prepare for and attend Board meetings and committee meetings.
- Consistently and attentively seek to promote the College in every way possible, especially among the PCA constituency, through the local church, presbytery, and community.
- Actively seek ways to influence prospective students and their families, both among high school students and those of earlier age levels.
- Seek ways to be adequately informed about campus and student activities, taking particular advantage of on-campus visits for personal involvement.
- Seek ways to become personally acquainted with faculty and staff and knowledgeable about their interests and needs.

- Be constantly alert to assist in identifying qualified and potentially interested prospective Board members and provide, whenever possible, to the chair of the Governance Committee a biographical sketch of each nominee, setting forth qualifications and reasons for nomination.
- It is the responsibility of each Trustee to complete a self-evaluation annually.

**EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

1. Candidates must be those who exhibit a mature walk with the Lord Jesus Christ, evidence commitment to His Word, and meet the requirements established by the bylaws of the corporation as approved by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America.
2. Candidates for the Boards of Trustees must aspire to the office and be willing to commit to the necessary meetings required (three times annually on the 4th Friday of January, April and September), as well as to promoting the Seminary with their resources and time. Trustees may be asked to work on special projects if their schedules permit.
3. Trustees must accept and understand thoroughly the importance of preparing the next generation of church leaders for many contexts of ministry, and should understand how the standards and practices of the Presbyterian Church in America direct this process.
4. Desirable experience for trustees includes the following: setting policies, goals, and objectives, setting and meeting financial budgets, strategic long-range planning, participation in the educational and mission efforts of the local church and presbytery, and familiarity with the pastoral and doctrinal challenges pastors and other church leaders regularly face.
5. Trustees must recognize the tremendous financial needs of the annual operating fund and special capital campaigns and should be willing and able to help the Seminary both personally and through their personal influence in these critical areas.
6. Trustees must recognize the importance of enrollment and be willing and able to encourage prospective students to enroll in the institution by being familiar with various academic and student programs.
7. Trustees should be individuals who know and understand the relationship of the various courts in the Presbyterian church and be strong advocates of Christian education and its relationship to evangelism, discipleship, church leadership, missions, church planting, and other aspects of the denomination.
8. The Board should have a good mix of business and professional people, builders, realtors, investors, industrialists, physicians, clergy, and educators. Therefore we seek to maintain a ratio of 16 ruling elders and 8 teaching elders on our board of 24, which is usually 4 ruling elders and 2 teaching elders in each four-year class.

**EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

EXPECTATIONS:

1. A Teaching or Ruling Elder in good standing within the local church and presbytery. (*BCO* 14-1.10)
2. A man of spiritual maturity, wisdom and discernment. A man of consistent prayer.
3. A man who can listen as well as speak. A man who listens with an open mind to the representatives of other denominations. One who is able to process information quickly while keeping in mind the long-range good of the denomination.
4. A man who has a good working knowledge of the Westminster Standards and of PCA polity, especially the *Book of Church Order* and the Rules of Assembly Operations.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Serve a three-year term, with the possibility of a second three-year term. (*RAO* 8-1)
2. Be available for two stated meetings (typically spring and fall) that take place by conference calls.
3. Be available to represent the PCA at meetings involving other denominations. (*RAO* 8-1)
4. Be available during General Assembly for Fraternal Delegate meetings and relationships. (*RAO* 8-1)

**EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA COMMITTEE**

1. A ruling or teaching elder in good standing within the local church and presbytery.
2. First-hand experience in church planting or in one of the outreach ministries in which MNA is engaged.
3. A man with the time to be involved as a committee member in order to:
prepare for regular meetings,
attend regular meetings, and
be involved in some aspect of MNA, either through his local church, presbytery
or through some special assignment from the General Assembly MNA Committee
4. A man with the desire and motivation to learn about the needs and special challenges in home missions through the ministry of MNA.
5. A man with a forward vision of what the PCA can become as MNA serves the churches, presbyteries and church planting networks of the PCA in their advancement of the Gospel through church planting and other outreach ministries.
6. A man who is committed to seeing the Gospel advance through the PCA among as many as possible of the many ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic people groups of North America.
7. A man who understands the uniqueness of Reformed theology and ecclesiology and at the same time recognizes the unique forms missions and church planting can take in seeking to fulfill the Great Commission in our time.
8. A man who works well in a group to process important and sensitive information. A man with a concern for the good of the whole rather than a desire to push only one department.
9. A man of spiritual maturity and depth. A man of consistent prayer.
10. A man who can listen as well as speak. A man who listens with an open mind to hear what others are saying, determining deep issues and processing this information quickly while keeping in mind the long-range good of the church.
11. A man of trust. A person who trusts other committee members and staff.

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES MISSION TO THE WORLD COMMITTEE

A. EXPECTATIONS:

1. Pastors of churches with successful missions programs:
 - a) The church has a regular missions emphasis.
 - b) The church supports with prayer and finances a number of MTW missionaries and ministries.
 - c) The church has commissioned and sent out its members as cross-cultural missionaries.
2. Laymen who are currently involved in their local church's world missions programs:
 - a) They serve on the missions committee.
 - b) They participate on-site in overseas ministries (travel to visit short-term missions service), etc.
3. Have proven leadership qualities and can make good decisions.
4. Knowledgeable of world affairs.
5. Men who carry positions of responsibility in their church, business and community.
6. Familiar with and/or experienced in serving on the governing body of organizations with more than 500 employees and a budget in excess of 50 million dollars.

B. Responsibilities:

1. Guard purpose and vision.
2. Select the Coordinator.
3. Support and evaluate the Coordinator.
4. Ensure effective planning.
5. Monitor and strengthen programs and responsibilities.
6. Monitor and approve the missionary candidate screening process.
7. Ensure adequate financial resources.
8. Protect assets and provide financial oversight.
9. Help to build a competent committee.
10. Ensure legal and ethical integrity.
11. Enhance MTW's public standing in the Presbyterian Church in America.

The committee meets in Atlanta for two days on the second Wednesday/Thursday of March and the 4th Wednesday/Thursday of September.

**EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
PCA FOUNDATION**

1. Men who are faithful in their service to the Lord and who recognize and appreciate the special opportunities for giving within the denomination.
2. Men with a biblical, God-centered view of wealth and generosity.
3. Men who possess a number of the following unique skills:
 - a) Good background with business/financial experience.
 - b) Close working relationship with investments, investment planning, personal financial or investments counseling.
 - c) Experienced business judgment.
 - d) Should have exposure to long-range planning, goal setting, policy making procedures.
 - e) Familiarity with investment markets, investment techniques, investment advisory services.
 - f) Have good knowledge of PCA & PCA people.
 - g) Have experience in advertising and promotion.
 - h) Have experience in public or private accounting.
 - i) Have experience with philanthropy or gift planning, either personally or as an advisor.

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES GENEVA BENEFITS GROUP

Bylaws Requirements

A board member must be a Teaching Elder, a Ruling Elder or a Deacon.

Desirable Background

1. Due to the technical nature of the work of the Board, it is desirable that a majority of the board members have a professional business background in the areas of Institutional Investments, Employee Benefits, or Insurance. Geneva prefers members with experience in Accounting, Investment Management, Institutional Investment Consulting, Insurance Risk Management, Insurance Underwriting, Institutional Portfolio Management, Retirement Plan Management and Consulting. Experience in Client Servicing or general business management would also be helpful.
2. In addition to the above qualifications, board members are expected to encourage a ministry focus.
3. Since the Relief Fund is a part of the ministry's overall responsibility, it is important that the Board consists of Teaching Elders who understand the needs of fellow ministers.
4. Nominees for the Board should be willing to give of their time to attend a minimum of three meetings a year, along with several conference calls throughout the year.
5. Current board members completing their first term make good candidates, given their previous experience.

**EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE**

1. A ruling or teaching elder in good standing within the local church and presbytery.
2. An individual with first-hand knowledge and experience with RUF in his presbytery.
3. Has time to be involved as a committee member to:
 - prepare for regular meetings (at least two a year),
 - attend regular meetings, and
 - be involved in some aspect of RUF either through a campus or presbytery committee or through some particular assignment from the GA RUF Committee.
4. Has the desire and motivation to learn about the needs and unique challenges in campus ministry through the ministry of RUF.
5. Has a forward vision of how RUF can strengthen the church.
6. Is committed to a biblical worldview and how that relates to the marketplace of ideas – the college campus.
7. Understands the uniqueness of Reformed theology and ecclesiology and how it drives the ministry of RUF.
8. Wants to see students grow in grace, fellowship, and service.
9. Has spiritual maturity and depth and strives to be committed to consistent prayer and bible reading.
10. Works well in a group to process important and sensitive information.
11. Can listen as well as speak. An individual who listens with an open mind to hear what others are saying, determining serious issues and processing this information quickly while keeping in mind the long-range good of the church.
12. Actively seeks to cultivate trust with other committee members and staff.
13. Understands the importance of reaching students on college campuses with the gospel.
14. Demonstrates a willingness to give financially (as he is able) to support the work of RUF.
15. Committed to connecting other potential supporters to RUF.

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES RIDGE HAVEN

EXPECTATIONS:

1. Board Members are eligible for re-election to a second five-year term after which there must be a one-year interval before further re-election.
2. The members of the Board of Directors of Ridge Haven are not subject to the *BCO* Chapter 14 relating to proportionate representation of Teaching and Ruling Elders.
3. Nominees to the Ridge Haven Board of Directors are preferred to have been personally involved in various conferences, camps, or other activities that will enable them to be familiar with all of the work of the Center.
4. For the present and until such time as Ridge Haven is able to expand locations to other areas of the United States, nominees to the Ridge Haven Board of Directors are preferred to live within the areas that most effectively serve the PCA constituency of the Southeastern states, Mid-Atlantic states, Mississippi and Ohio Valley states, and the states immediately west of and adjacent to the Mississippi River.
5. Men with the following skills and/or experience are especially needed: Financial management, administration, real-estate development, site development, camping and conferencing, landscaping, construction, and fund-raising as well as the areas involved in the development and operation of the Center.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Ridge Haven Board members are asked to commit themselves first and foremost to labor spiritually by regularly praying for Ridge Haven, its staff, volunteers, activities, projects, and needs and exercising their faith on behalf of Ridge Haven with regard to each of these things.
2. Ridge Haven Board members are asked to expend personal time and energy by involvement that includes participation in all Board activities and meetings and hands-on participation in being a part of various conferences, camps, or other activities that will enable familiarity with all aspects of Ridge Haven.
3. Ridge Haven Board members are expected to promote Ridge Haven in their own local congregation and presbytery creating invitations for Ridge Haven presentations, distributing literature and recruiting and encouraging individual, church, and presbytery support.

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES STANDING JUDICIAL COMMISSION

EXPECTATIONS:

1. A Ruling or Teaching Elder in good standing within the local church and presbytery. (*BCO* 15-4)
2. A man of spiritual maturity, wisdom and discernment. A man of consistent prayer.
3. A man who can listen as well as speak. A man who listens with an open mind to the concerns of complainants and respondents. One who is able to process information quickly while keeping in mind the long-range good of the church.
4. One who has a good working knowledge of the Westminster Standards and of PCA polity, especially the *Book of Church Order* and Rules of Assembly Operations.
5. A man of trust. A person who trusts other commission members.
6. A current member completing his first term makes a particularly good candidate to serve again, since the learning curve will be significantly reduced. He can succeed himself with no waiting period.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Serve a four-year term, with the possibility of being reelected for additional terms. (*BCO* 15-4)
2. Be available for at least 2 meetings in the Atlanta area of the full SJC (mid-October and first of March).
3. To participate on judicial panels between regular SJC meetings, as needed.
4. To have oversight over appeals, complaints, and judicial references from lower courts. (*RAO* 17-1)
5. To judge without respect to persons, and if so tempted, to recuse himself from judgment. (*RAO* 17-1.2)
6. To judge not according to appearances but judge righteous judgment. (*RAO* 17-1.3)
7. To judge according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, through his best efforts applied to nothing other than the record of the case and other documents properly before him. (*RAO* 17-1.4)
8. To recuse himself in any case if he cannot conscientiously apply the Constitution. (*RAO* 17-1.5)

**EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
THEOLOGICAL EXAMINING COMMITTEE**

EXPECTATIONS:

1. A Teaching or Ruling Elder in good standing within the local church and presbytery. (*BCO* 14-1.14; *RAO* 8-3)
2. A man of spiritual maturity, wisdom and discernment. A man of consistent prayer.
3. A man who can listen as well as speak. One who is able to process information quickly while keeping in mind the long-range good of the denomination.
4. A man who has a good working knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, Reformed Theology, the Westminster Standards and of PCA polity, especially the *Book of Church Order* and the *Rules of Assembly Operations*.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Serve a three-year term. (*BCO* 14-1.14; *RAO* 8-3)
2. This committee shall examine all first and second level administrative officers of committees, boards and agencies, and those acting temporarily in these positions who are being recommended for first time employment. They are to be examined in the areas of: (*BCO* 14-1.14)
 - a. Christian experience
 - b. Theology
 - c. The Sacraments
 - d. Church government
 - e. Bible content
 - f. Church History
 - g. History of the Presbyterian Church in America

PART I

DIRECTORY OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES AND AGENCIES 2025-2026

I. OFFICERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Moderator

TE Kevin DeYoung
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Provisional Stated Clerk

RE John Bise
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Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143
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E-mail: ac@pcanet.org

II. MINISTRIES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Administration

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Committee on Discipleship Ministries

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Covenant College

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14049 Scenic Highway
Lookout Mountain, GA 30750-4164
Phone: 706-419-1117
E-mail: brad.voyles@covenant.edu
www.covenant.edu

Covenant Theological Seminary

TE Tom C. Gibbs, President
12330 Conway Road
St. Louis, MO 63141-8609
Phone: 314-434-4044
E-mail: tom.gibbs@covenantseminary.edu
www.covenantseminary.edu

Mission to North America

RE Steve Dowling, Interim Coordinator
1700 North Brown Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143
Phone: 678-825-1200
E-mail: iince@pcanet.org
www.pcamna.org

Mission to the World

TE Lloyd Kim, Coordinator
1600 North Brown Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8141
Phone: 678-823-0004
E-mail: lloyd.kim@mtw.org
www.mtw.org

PCA Foundation, Inc.

RE Timothy W. Townsend, President
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 103
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143
Phone: 678-825-1040
E-mail: ttownsend@pcanet.org
www.pcafoundation.com

Geneva Benefits Group

TE Edward W. Dunnington, President
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 106
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143
Phone: 678-825-1260
E-mail: ed.dunnington@genevabenefits.org
www.pcarbi.org

Reformed University Fellowship

RE Andrew Rein, Coordinator
1600 North Brown Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143
Phone: 678-825-1070
E-mail: will.huss@ruf.org
www.ruf.org

Ridge Haven

TE Cameron Anderson, Exec. Director
215 Ridge Haven Road
Brevard, NC 28712
Phone: 828-862-3916
E-mail: cameron.anderson@ridgehaven.org
www.ridgehaven.org

III. PERMANENT COMMITTEES (2025-2026)

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: RE Danny McDaniel **VICE CHAIRMAN:** RE EJ Nusbaum
SECRETARY: TE Michael Hearon

Class of 2029

TE Ligon Duncan, Mississippi Valley	RE Frank Cohee, Providence
	RE Melton Duncan, Calvary

Class of 2028

TE Scott Edburg, Illiana	RE EJ Nusbaum, Rocky Mountain
TE Richard Phillips, Calvary	

Class of 2027

TE Jason Helopoulos, Great Lakes	RE Dave Cias, Houston Metro
	RE Alan Walters, Mississippi Valley

Class of 2026

TE Michael Hearon, Savannah River	RE Danny McDaniel, Houston Metro
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Alternates

TE Brian Salter, Tennessee Valley	RE Rick Owens, North Texas
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Chairman of Committee or Board, or Designate

TE Scott Barber, Georgia Foothills Committee on Discipleship Ministries	RE Jeremy Kath, Nashville Reformed University Fellowship
TE Hugh Barlett, Missouri Covenant Theological Seminary	RE Martin Moore, Georgia Foothills Covenant College
TE Dean Faulkner, Central Carolina Mission to North America	RE William Stone, Mississippi Valley PCA Foundation
TE Andrew E. Field, Metropolitan New York Geneva Benefits	RE Bryan Wintersteen, Evangel Mission to the World
TE David Sasser Hall, Fellowship Ridge Haven	

COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES
CHAIRMAN: TE W. Scott Barber **VICE CHAIRMAN:** RE Taylor Clement
SECRETARY: TE Robert Cathcart

Class of 2030

TE George Grant, Nashville
 TE Steven Spinnenwebber, North Florida
 RE Mark Hogewood, Evangel

Class of 2029

TE Danny Kwon, Korean Eastern
 RE James Murphy, Blue Ridge
 RE Larkin Chapman, Mississippi Valley

Class of 2028

TE Richard Burguet, Central Florida
 TE Robert Cathcart, Calvary
 RE David Hinkley, Great Lakes

Class of 2027

TE Christopher Lee Hutchings., Ohio
 RE Randy Stair, Metro Atlanta
 RE Taylor Clement, Missouri

Class of 2026

TE W. Scott Barber, Georgia Foothills
 TE Dean Williams, South Texas
 RE Dan Barber, Central Indiana

Alternates

TE David Vosseller, Savannah River
 RE Stuart McAllister, Georgia Foothills

COMMITTEE ON MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA
CHAIRMAN: TE Dean Faulkner **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE Hunter Brewer
SECRETARY: Vacancy

Class of 2030

TE Zachary Groff, Calvary
 RE Mark Kaiser, Wisconsin
 RE William Taft, Central Indiana

Class of 2029

TE Hunter Brewer, Covenant
 TE Nathan Shurden, Nashville
 RE Samuel Suttle, Mississippi Valley

Class of 2028

TE Jeremy Byrd, Evangel
 RE Mitch Young, South Texas
 RE Lance Kinzer, Heartland

Class of 2027

TE Dean Faulkner, Central Carolina
 TE Tim Rice, Southwest Florida
 RE Timothy Threadgill, Mississippi Valley

Class of 2026

TE Roland Barnes, Savannah River
 RE Brent Andersen, Central Carolina
 RE Michael Brown, Pee Dee

Alternates

Vacancy
 RE Eric Manthei, Houston Metro

COMMITTEE ON MISSION TO THE WORLD

CHAIRMAN: TE Owen Lee **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE Patrick Womack
SECRETARY: TE Josh Rieger **TREASURER:** RE John Bateman

Class of 2030

TE Jamie Peipon, Mississippi Valley

RE Daryl Brister, Houston Metro
 RE David Moore, Central Florida

Class of 2029

TE Kevin Smith, Tennessee Valley
 TE Patrick Womack, Suncoast Florida

RE John Kunkel, North Florida

Class of 2028

TE Joshua Rieger, Houston Metro

RE Bryan Wintersteen, Evangel
 RE Scott Wulff, Ohio

Class of 2027

TE Maranatha Chung, Philadelphia
 TE Owen Lee, Korean Capital

RE Theo Hagg, Westminster

Class of 2026

TE Shaun M. Nolan, Pittsburgh

RE John E. Bateman, North Texas
 RE Oscar R. Aylor, Blue Ridge

Alternates

TE Larry Trotter, South Florida

RE Charles Lokey, Northwest Georgia

COMMITTEE ON REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP

CHAIRMAN: RE Jeremy Kath **VICE CHAIRMAN:** Vacancy
SECRETARY: RE Stephen Berry

Class of 2030

TE Robert Cunningham, Ohio Valley

RE Tyler Martin, Platte Valley
 RE John Miller, Eastern Carolina

Class of 2029

TE David Felker, Mississippi Valley
 TE Brian Frey, Pacific Northwest

RE Stephen Gordon, Ohio Valley

Class of 2028

TE Kenneth Foster, Heritage

RE Stephen Berry, Southern New England
 RE Tobe Hester, Lowcountry

Class of 2027

TE Martin Biggs, Hills and Plains
 TE Eric Zellner, Southeast Alabama

RE Justen Ellis, Northwest Georgia

Class of 2026

TE Iron D. Kim, Northern California

RE Jeremy Kath, Nashville
 RE Rob Grabenkort, Georgia Foothills

Alternates

TE Jack Howell, Tidewater

RE Michael Martin, Blue Ridge

IV. AGENCIES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF COVENANT COLLEGE

CHAIRMAN: RE John Truschel **VICE CHAIRMAN:** RE Robert Curtis
SECRETARY: RE Robert Wilkinson **TREASURER:** RE Michael Kramer

Class of 2029

TE Bradley J. Barnes, Southern New England	RE Robert Curtis, Southwest Florida
TE Alexander Brown, Savannah River	RE Mark Griggs, Tennessee Valley
TE Dennis Louis, Tennessee Valley	RE Drew Jelgerhuis, Great Lakes
	RE Marty Moore, Georgia Foothills
	RE Stephen Rowe, Hills and Plains

Class of 2028

TE Timothy Brindle, Philadelphia Metro West	RE Richard T. Bowser, Eastern Carolina
TE Matthew David Fray, North Texas	RE Gregory Moore, Susquehanna Valley
	RE Paul Moore, Calvary
	RE William H. Ryan, South Florida
	RE Stephen E. Sligh, Southwest Florida

Class of 2027

TE Thurman Williams, Missouri	RE Michael Kramer, Tennessee Valley
RE Ken Smith, North Texas	RE John Kwasny, Mississippi Valley
	RE John Truschel, Eastern Carolina
	RE Robert Wilkinson, Missouri
	RE R. Craig Wood, Blue Ridge

Class of 2026

TE Thomas Groelsema, Central Carolina	RE Don Mellott, Pacific Northwest
TE Sean McGowan, Gulf Coast	RE Stephen Rowe, Hills and Plains
TE Omari Hill, Metro Atlanta	RE Towner Scheffler, Piedmont Triad
	RE Gordon Sluis, Mississippi Valley

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CHAIRMAN: TE Hugh Barlett **VICE CHAIRMAN:** RE Frank Wicks

SECRETARY: RE Doug Hickel

Class of 2029

TE Hugh Barlett, Missouri
TE Brian Cosby, Tennessee Valley

RE William Bennett, Evangel
RE Curtis Scott Shidemantle, Ascension
RE Lee Tyner, North Texas
RE Frank Wicks, Missouri

Class of 2028

TE Brian Habig, Calvary
TE Murray Lee, Evangel

RE David Duren, Houston Metro
RE Bruce Harrington, Rocky Mountain
RE Paul R. Stoll, Chicago Metro
RE Gif Thornton, Nashville

Class of 2027

TE Jimmy Agan, Metro Atlanta
TE Robert Flayhart, Evangel
TE Fredric Ryan Laughlin, Potomac

RE Mark Ensio, Arizona
RE John Fitch, South Texas
RE Dwight Jones, Central Georgia

Class of 2026

TE Russell St. John, Missouri
TE David Sinclair, Calvary

RE James Albritton, Evangel
RE Doug Hickel, Missouri
RE Ron McNalley, North Texas
RE Walter Turner, Pittsburgh

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PCA FOUNDATION

CHAIRMAN: RE William O. Stone Jr. **VICE CHAIRMAN:** DE Andrew Schmidt

SECRETARY: RE John Alexander

Class of 2029

RE Ken Kieley, South Texas
RE Stephen Murphy, Northwest Georgia

Class of 2028

TE Patrick W. Curles, Nashville

RE John Alexander, Metro Atlanta
RE Rob W. Morton, Central Georgia

Class of 2027

TE Solomon Kim, Southern New England

RE William O. Stone Jr., Miss. Valley

Class of 2026

RE Owen H. Malcolm, Georgia Foothills
RE W. Russell Trapp, Providence
DE Andrew Schmidt, Central Carolina

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF GENEVA BENEFITS
CHAIRMAN: TE Andrew E. Field **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE Roderick Miles
SECRETARY: TE Jon Medlock **TREASURER:** RE Chet Lilly

TE Roderick Miles, Northern California	Class of 2029 RE Gary D. Campbell, Metro Atlanta RE Scott P. Magnuson, Pittsburgh
TE Andrew E. Field, Metropolitan NY	Class of 2028 RE James Clark, Mississippi Valley DE Theodore J. Dankovich, Calvary
	Class of 2027 RE L. Robert Clark, Tennessee Valley RE David C. Allegood, Pittsburgh RE Eric Burkholder, Hills and Plains
TE Tony Giles, Nashville	Class of 2026 RE Ken Downer, Highlands RE Chris Rogers, Covenant

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF RIDGE HAVEN
PRESIDENT: TE David Sasser Hall **VICE PRESIDENT:** TE J. Andrew White
SECRETARY/TREASURER: TE Travis Hutchinson

TE Michael Chad Watkins, Gulf Coast	Class of 2030 RE Larry Stahl, Iowa
TE J. Andrew White, Westminster	Class of 2029 RE Thomas Cook, Gulfstream
TE Travis Hutchinson, Southern New England	Class of 2028 RE Tuan La, South Texas
TE David Sasser Hall, Fellowship	Class of 2027 RE Zach Hubbs, Suncoast Florida
	Class of 2026 RE Art Fox, North Florida TE D. T. House, Savannah River

V. SPECIAL COMMITTEES

THEOLOGICAL EXAMINING COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: TE Drew Martin **SECRETARY:** Vacancy

Class of 2028

TE Christopher Bechtel, Pacific Northwest RE Randy Scott, South Texas

Class of 2027

TE Drew Martin, Central Carolina RE Jim Wert, Metro Atlanta

Class of 2026

TE Jonathan Master, Calvary RE James Elkin, Mississippi Valley

Alternates

TE Bruce Baugus, Great Lakes RE Josh Spears, Hills and Plains

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL BUSINESS

CHAIRMAN: TE Jason Piland **SECRETARY:** RE Chris Shoemaker

Class of 2029

TE David Gordon, Ascension RE Joshua Torrey, South Texas

Class of 2028

TE David Strain, Mississippi Valley RE John Ward Weiss, Southeast Alabama

Class of 2027

TE Stephen Tipton, Gulf Coast RE Chris Shoemaker, Southern New England

Class of 2026

TE Jason Piland, Ohio RE Bryce Sullivan, Nashville

Alternates

TE Randy Schlichting, Metro Atlanta RE Philip Temple, Calvary

COMMITTEE ON INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

CHAIRMAN: RE Dennis Watts **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE Nathan Chambers

SECRETARY: TE David Gilleran

Class of 2028

TE Kenneth McHeard, Savannah River RE Steven Madden, Chesapeake

Class of 2027

TE Nathan Chambers, Pacific Northwest RE Aaron Reeves, Hills and Plains

Class of 2026

TE David Gilleran, Blue Ridge RE Dennis Watts, Mississippi Valley

Alternates

TE Michael Anderson, Great Lakes RE Rick Hutton, James River

Ex-Officio Member: RE John Bise, Providence

VI. STANDING JUDICIAL COMMISSION

CHAIRMAN: TE Fred Greco **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE Guy Prentiss Waters
SECRETARY: TE Hoochan Paul Lee **ASST. SECRETARY:** RE John Pickering

Class of 2029

TE Paul L. Bankson, Central Georgia	RE Steve Dowling, Southeast Alabama
TE David F. Coffin Jr., Potomac	RE Frederick Jay Neikirk, Ascension
TE Stephen Tipton, Gulf Coast	RE R. Jackson Wilson, Georgia Foothills

Class of 2028

TE Jay Bruce, Metro Atlanta Presbytery	RE Howie Donahoe, Pacific Northwest
TE Eric Landry, South Texas	RE Frederic Marcinak, Calvary
TE Hoochan Paul Lee, Korean Northeastern	RE Caleb Stegall, Heartland

Class of 2027

TE Rhett Dodson, Ohio	RE Daniel A. Carrell, James River
TE Brad Evans, Southern New England	RE John Maynard, Central Florida
TE Paul D. Kooistra, Warrior	RE John B. White Jr., Metro Atlanta

Class of 2026

TE Art Sartorius, Siouxlands	RE James Eggert, Southwest Florida
TE Fred Greco, Houston Metro	RE John Bise, Providence
TE Guy Prentiss Waters, Mississippi Valley	RE John Pickering, Evangel

Clerk of the Commission

RE John Bise, Providence

REPORT OF APPOINTEES TO COMMITTEES OF COMMISSIONERS
for the 52nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America
Odd-Numbered Presbyteries – DUE April 24, 2026

Presbytery: _____ Attested by: _____

Presbytery Clerk

Ruling Elders

COMMITTEE	Commissioner Name	Email	Church Name (with City, ST)
Administration			
Discipleship Ministries			
Covenant Theological Seminary			
Interchurch Relations			
Mission to North America			
PCA Foundation			

Teaching Elders

COMMITTEE	Commissioner Name	Email	Church Name (with City, ST)
Covenant College			
Geneva Benefits			
Mission to the World			
Ridge Haven			
Reformed University Fellowship			

Overtures

Elder Type	Commissioner Name	Email	Church Name (with City, ST)
Ruling Elder			
Teaching Elder			

REPORT OF APPOINTEES TO COMMITTEES OF COMMISSIONERS
for the 52nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America
Even-Numbered Presbyteries – DUE April 24, 2026

Presbytery: _____ Attested by: _____

Presbytery Clerk

Teaching Elders

COMMITTEE	Commissioner Name	Email	Church Name (with City, ST)
Administration			
Discipleship Ministries			
Covenant Theological Seminary			
Interchurch Relations			
Mission to North America			
PCA Foundation			

Ruling Elders

COMMITTEE	Commissioner Name	Email	Church Name (with City, ST)
Covenant College			
Geneva Benefits			
Mission to the World			
Ridge Haven			
Reformed University Fellowship			

Overtures

Elder Type	Commissioner Name	Email	Church Name (with City, ST)
Ruling Elder			
Teaching Elder			

**RULES AND FORMULA FOR APPOINTMENT
TO COMMITTEES OF COMMISSIONERS AND THE OVERTURES COMMITTEE**

Regarding the Committees of Commissioners, RAO 14-2 reads as follows:

14-2. Each presbytery shall, prior to the meeting of the Assembly, elect one of its commissioners to each of these committees of commissioners (cf. 14-1), dividing them as to ruling and teaching elders by a formula established by the Stated Clerk. In the event that presbytery does not have sufficient teaching elders to supply the committees thus assigned, the presbytery may, at its own discretion, elect ruling elders to these committees (or vice versa, may elect teaching elders for insufficient ruling elders). In the event that presbytery is not able to supply members for all the committees, the presbytery may select the committees to which they wish to appoint representatives. Commissioners serving on permanent Committees or Agencies or sub-committees of the Assembly or the staffs thereof are not eligible to serve on any of these committees of commissioners. For the purpose of defining those ineligible for service in committees of commissioners, permanent Committee or Agency “staff” is to be understood as persons required to be examined by the Theological Examining Committee (*BCO* 14-1.12.) and all permanent Committee and Agency support personnel. All commissioners should bear in mind *Robert’s Rules of Order* regarding abstaining from voting on a question of direct personal interest (*RRO* § 45).

Regarding the Overtures Committee, RAO 15-2 reads as follows:

15-2. Each presbytery shall, prior to the meeting of each General Assembly, elect to the Overtures Committee one teaching elder and one ruling elder from among its registered commissioners to the General Assembly. Unless approved by a two thirds (2/3) vote of his presbytery, no commissioner shall serve on the Overtures Committee for more than two (2) consecutive Assemblies. It is recommended that, where necessary, the presbytery underwrite the expenses of its representatives to the Overtures Committee.

NOTE: Members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee, the Review of Presbytery Records Committee and the Standing Judicial Commission are eligible to serve on Committees of Commissioners.

Even-Numbered Presbyteries

(Use Form 065)

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2. Gulf Coast | 36. Korean Eastern | 66. Houston Metro |
| 4. Central Georgia | 38. Palmetto | 68. Suncoast Florida |
| 6. South Florida | 40. Southeast Alabama | 70. Chicago Metro |
| 8. Calvary | 42. Korean Southeastern | 72. Canada West |
| 10. Mississippi Valley | 44. Korean Southern | 74. Philadelphia Metro West |
| 12. Evangel | 46. South Coast | 76. Georgia Foothills |
| 14. Tennessee Valley | 48. Potomac | 78. Providence |
| 16. Pacific | 50. Rocky Mountain | 80. Central Indiana |
| 20. Central Florida | 52. Korean Northwest | 82. Korean Northeastern |
| 22. Eastern Carolina | 54. Pittsburgh | 84. Korean Southwest OC |
| 24. Philadelphia | 56. Nashville | 86. Lowcountry |
| 26. Heritage | 58. North Florida | 88. Hills and Plains |
| 28. Great Lakes | 60. Southern New England | 90. West Hudson |
| 30. New Jersey | 62. Ohio Valley | |
| 34. Missouri | 64. Iowa | |

Elect TEACHING Elders to –

1. Administration
2. Discipleship Ministries
4. Covenant Seminary
6. Interchurch Relations
7. Mission to North America
9. PCA Foundation

Elect RULING Elders to –

3. Covenant College
5. Geneva Benefits
8. Mission to the World
10. Ridge Haven
11. Reformed University Fellowship

Odd-Numbered Presbyteries

(Use Form 064)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Warrior | 33. Pacific Northwest | 65. Blue Ridge |
| 3. Westminster | 35. Northern Illinois | 67. Savannah River |
| 5. Metro Atlanta | 37. Korean Southwest | 69. Gulfstream |
| 7. Covenant | 39. South Texas | 71. Wisconsin |
| 9. Grace | 41. Korean Central | 73. Eastern |
| 11. North Texas | 43. Susquehanna Valley | 75. Pennsylvania |
| 13. James River | 45. Heartland | 77. Northwest Georgia |
| 15. Highlands | 47. Northern California | 79. Platte Valley |
| 17. New River | 49. Southwest Florida | 81. Ohio |
| 19. Ascension | 51. Korean Capital | 83. Catawba Valley |
| 21. Central Carolina | 53. Southeast Louisiana | 85. Tidewater |
| 23. Arizona | 55. Fellowship | 87. Pee Dee |
| 25. Siouxlands | 57. Metropolitan New York | 89. Columbus Metro |
| 27. Eastern Canada | 59. New York State | |
| 29. Illiana | 61. Piedmont Triad | |
| 31. Northern New England | 63. Chesapeake | |

Elect RULING Elders to –

1. Administration
2. Discipleship Ministries
4. Covenant Seminary
6. Interchurch Relations
7. Mission to North America
9. PCA Foundation

Elect TEACHING Elders to –

3. Covenant College
5. Geneva Benefits
8. Mission to the World
10. Ridge Haven
11. Reformed University Fellowship

REPORT OF APPOINTEES COMMUNION ELDER

53rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America
Due to Stated Clerk's Office by May 26, 2026

Presbytery: _____ Attested by: _____
Signature of Presbytery Clerk

You may also submit Communion Elder appointments online:

<https://pcaga.org/resources/#volunteer>

Communion Elder:

Name (including TE or RE): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Cell #: _____

Church Name: _____

Name (including TE or RE): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Cell #: _____

Church Name: _____

Name (including TE or RE): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Cell #: _____

Church Name: _____

Name (including TE or RE): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Cell #: _____

Church Name: _____

Submit online at link above or email hharrison@pcanet.org.

Nominations Process Overview

This document provides a brief overview of the nominations process, forms, and nomenclature (including some helpful tips). This is only an overview – for specific rules or guidance, please refer to the Nominating Committee Manual, the appropriate sections of the BCO and RAO, or ask the Stated Clerk's Office.

First – download the Nominations materials and forms from our website:

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

-You may download forms individually, but if you are in charge of nominations in your presbytery, you may find it helpful to download the complete nominations packet in a zip file.

If you download the Zip File called “Fall Nominations Packet”, you should be able to find the following folders and files:

Nominating Committee and RPR: Appointments are for three years, and the class year is held by the presbytery (not the individual). So if your presbytery is in the class of 2026, but you don't have someone currently serving on RPR, if you appoint them this year, they would only serve this year before their term expires.

- Files 055 and 056 show the current appointments to both NC and RPR, and the class year and elder type for your presbytery.

- If you wish to appoint someone, or to change an existing appointment, fill out form 053 and return it by the deadline.

Permanent Committees and Boards: These members are nominated by the presbytery, reviewed by the Nominating Committee, and selected for a slate presented to the General Assembly. There is an opportunity for floor nominations at General Assembly, and then the final slate is elected to serve a multi-year term (length dependent on the particular committee or board).

- 063 GA Directory is the complete directory of all the permanent committees and boards. If you are not sure who from your presbytery is serving on a General Assembly-level committee, this is where to check.

- Each presbytery may nominate one RE and one TE to each of the permanent committees/boards. The presbytery must turn in form 059, and each nominee must turn in form 060. The deadline printed at the top of the form is a hard deadline. No late forms are accepted.

- Alternates are automatically re-nominated unless the member does not wish to serve again.

- Special circumstances for consideration:

- You may nominate a Deacon to serve on the Boards of Geneva and the PCA Foundation.

- Each presbytery may have only one member on the SJC. If your presbytery already has a member serving, you may not nominate an elder to the SJC.

GA Committee of Commissioners:

Each presbytery may appoint one commissioner to each Committee of Commissioners. CoCs only serve at one General Assembly. Your presbytery's "number" indicates which type of elder you should appoint to each CoC (for example, if you are an even numbered presbytery, you should use form 065 to turn in your appointments). We accept late appointees for CoC's. If you find out someone is attending GA after the deadline and would like to serve, please email us their info, or an updated form, and we will add them to the roster.

Helpful Hints:

- **Class Years end at General Assembly.** If your term ends in 2026, you would serve through the 2026 General Assembly, and then roll off the committee.

- **Appointments vs. Nominations** – Presbyteries APPOINT members to Nominating Committee, RPR, and Committees of Commissioners. This means each presbytery may have representation on each of these committees, and once your presbytery APPOINTS the member, they begin serving immediately – no further steps are needed.

Presbyteries NOMINATE members to General Assembly level permanent committees and boards (such as MTW's Committee, the Interchurch Relations Committee, and the Standing Judicial Commission). These members are NOMINATED by their presbytery, must fill out a bio form, and are reviewed by the Nominating Committee. A slate is selected and then elected by the General Assembly. Not every presbytery is represented on every committee.

Practicing Church Discipline

L. Roy Taylor¹
Stated Clerk Emeritus, PCA

The ecumenical creeds speak of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Arising from the Reformation, Reformed Churches have held that the marks of the Church should include the faithful preaching of the Word, the proper administration of the sacraments and the practice of biblical discipline.²

The history of denominations since the Reformation has proven that theological decline and the neglect of discipline often go hand in hand. The history of mainline denominations tends to involve three factors;

1. Theological decline (an erosion of biblical authority and a resultant dissimulation regarding doctrinal standards).
2. Neglect of discipline (both morally and theologically).
3. Abuse of ecclesiastical power (no matter what the church polity, any system may be abused and manipulated). Often that means that those who need to be disciplined are not, and those who are orthodox are persecuted.

The story line is the same; only the cast of characters and time frames are different.

Discipline (*disciplina*), from the earliest days of the Church, is training in the Christian way of life, not just judicial process.

Discipline involves;

- Discipleship, training Christians to follow a biblical lifestyle, a Christian perspective and practice in all areas of life, loving obedience to the law of Christ (Matt. 28:16-20;
- Informal pastoral discipline *BCO* 27-1 a.; 38-4
- Formal judicial process. *BCO* 27-1 b.

Discipline in Presbyterian Church Government. The Presbyterian system of church government is a *biblical, representative, and connectional* system.³ We practice discipline because it is

¹ Updated by the Stated Clerk's Office, November 2025.

² See Calvin, Institutes IV, 12.1; Second Helvetic Confession, 1566; Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England, XXXIII, 1563; Irish Articles of Religion, 1615, sec. 73; Westminster Confession, Ch. XXX, 1647; Savoy Declaration, 1658; London Baptist Confession, 1689, ch. 26.12

³ Presbyterians do not believe that they are the only Christians, or that Churches with other types of Church Government are not valid Christian Churches. Presbyterians do believe, however, that the Presbyterian, biblical, representative and connectional system is that which conforms most consistently with the Scriptures. Presbyterian Church Government is *biblical* because it is based on biblical directives and principles drawn from both the Old and New Testaments (not just the New Testament). The historical development of Church Government is informative, but not determinative for us. Both our form of government and our theology are based on the entire Bible. Presbyterian Church Government is *representative* because the people choose their spiritual leaders to govern the Church (its members and officers) on the local, regional, and national levels. We practice mutual accountability and discipline through our representative government. Presbyterian Church Government is *connectional*; local churches see themselves as part of the larger Church. We hold to a common binding doctrinal, confessional standard of the Reformed Faith, the *Westminster Standards*. Local churches, no matter what size they may be, do not minister best alone, but in cooperation with the larger Church. We engage in cooperative ministry as a body of churches to carry out the Great Commission Christ gave to the Church.

biblical, because it is the responsibility of elders and because the act of one court of the church is to be recognized by the other courts of the church.

Discipline is important and necessary.

- The Westminster Assembly produced the *Westminster Standards*, a Form of Government and a Directory of Worship. The FOG included disciplinary procedures.
- The *BCO* has three sections (Form of Government, Rules of Discipline, and Directory of Worship).
- The first General Assembly (1789) included some Preliminary Principles to the first American *BCO*, several of which deal with discipline.⁴

BCO 27-3. The exercise of discipline is highly important and necessary. In its proper usage discipline maintains:

-
- ⁴ 1. God alone is Lord of the conscience and has left it free from any doctrines or commandments of men (a) which are in any respect contrary to the Word of God, or (b) which, in regard to matters of faith and worship, are not governed by the Word of God. Therefore, the rights of private judgment in all matters that respect religion are universal and inalienable. No religious constitution should be supported by the civil power further than may be necessary for protection and security equal and common to all others.
 2. In perfect consistency with the above principle, every Christian Church, or union or association of particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ has appointed. In the exercise of this right it may, notwithstanding, err in making the terms of communion either too lax or too narrow; yet even in this case, it does not infringe upon the liberty or the rights of others, but only makes an improper use of its own.
 3. Our blessed Saviour, for the edification of the visible Church, which is His body, has appointed officers not only to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, but also to exercise discipline for the preservation both of truth and duty. It is incumbent upon these officers and upon the whole Church in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous, observing in all cases the rules contained in the Word of God.
 4. Godliness is founded on truth. A test of truth is its power to promote holiness according to our Saviour's rule, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). No opinion can be more pernicious or more absurd than that which brings truth and falsehood upon the same level.
On the contrary, there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise it would be of no consequence either to discover truth or to embrace it.
 5. While, under the conviction of the above principle, it is necessary to make effective provision that all who are admitted as teachers be sound in the faith, there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good character and principles may differ. In all these it is the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other.
 6. Though the character, qualifications and authority of church officers are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method of officer investiture, the power to elect persons to the exercise of authority in any particular society resides in that society.
 7. All church power, whether exercised by the body in general, or by representation, is only ministerial and declarative since the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice. No church judicatory may make laws to bind the conscience. All church courts may err through human frailty, yet it rests upon them to uphold the laws of Scripture though this obligation be lodged with fallible men.
 8. Since ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral or spiritual in its object, and not attended with any civil effects, it can derive no force whatever, but from its own justice, the approbation of an impartial public, and the countenance and blessing of the great Head of the Church.

If the preceding scriptural principles be steadfastly adhered to, the vigor and strictness of government and discipline, applied with pastoral prudence and Christian love, will contribute to the glory and well-being of the Church.

- a. the glory of God,
- b. the purity of His Church,
- c. the keeping and reclaiming of disobedient sinners. Discipline is for the purpose of godliness (1 Timothy 4:7); therefore, it demands a self-examination under Scripture.

Its ends, so far as it involves judicial action, are the rebuke of offenses, the removal of scandal, the vindication of the honor of Christ, the promotion of the purity and general edification of the Church, and the spiritual good of offenders themselves.

Elders, acting in plurality, are responsible to exercise discipline.

- The office of elder originated in the OT (Numbers 11).
- The office of elder was expanded by the development of the synagogue system after the destruction of the First Temple (585 B.C). Part of the role of a senate of elders in a local synagogue was to exercise discipline.
- The office of elder was carried over into the NT. Paul ordained elders in every city (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5), a plurality of elders in each congregation (Acts 11:30; 13:1; 14:23; 15:2; 16:4; 20:17, 28; 21:18; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:1-2; 4:14; Titus 1:5; Jas. 5:14; I Pet. 5:1-2; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24).
- The Council of Jerusalem is the *locus classicus* of Presbyterian polity in operation (Acts 15).⁵
- The terms used to describe the role of elder all specify or imply the office of elder to be an office of spiritual authority.⁶
- Discipline is part of the work of elders (I Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17)
- The congregational vows taken at the ordination of ruling elders include submission to their authority (BCO 24-6).⁷
- The congregational vow taken at the installation of a pastor specifically mentions submission to him in the exercise of discipline (BCO 21-6, Q. 2).⁸

⁵ A single church appealed to the larger Church to settle a dispute (Acts 15:2, 22). Authority was shared by a plurality of elders, vv. 6, 22-23). The decision of the assembly was the decision of the whole Church (v. 22). The decision of the assembly was a binding confessional standard, vv. 23, 30; 16: 4).

⁶ Elder (presbuteros), Acts 11:30; I Tim. 5:17; overseer, bishop (episkopos) I Tim. 3:1-2; Acts 20:28; leader, or governor, Heb. 13:7, 17, 24 [the *Westminster Form of Government* referred to Ruling Elders as “Church Governors”]; shepherd, Acts 20:28, Eph. 4:11; I Pet. 5:2; teacher Eph. 4:11; steward (a servant with delegated responsibility), Titus 1:7; parent, I Tim. 3:4-5.

⁷ The ruling elder or deacon elect having answered in the affirmative, the minister shall address to the members of the church the following question:

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

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

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

The minister shall then say:

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

There are several prerequisites that need to be in place in order for discipline to be effective.

- Church members must value the fellowship of the Church. This should involve true fellowship (κοινωνία, Acts 2:42), not just formal affiliation. So churches must develop genuine fellowship.
- Church members must value the privilege of receiving the sacrament of communion as a means of grace (I Cor. 10:16).
- Office bearers must hold in high esteem the privilege of being office bearers in the Church. (President Woodrow Wilson considered the highest honor in his life to have been his being a Presbyterian elder).
- Members need to be informed of the possibility of discipline when joining the church.
 - One of the vows of membership is to submit to the government and discipline of the church (*BCO* 57-5, Q. 5).
 - Some Sessions consider it wise not only to record in the sessional minutes but also have new members sign the membership vows and the Clerk of Session keep the signed applications on file.
 - Office-bearers additionally vow to submit to their brethren in Lord (*BCO* 21-5, Q 4; 24-6, Q. 5)
- Judicial process needs to be followed for major offenses. In order for a member or officer of the PCA to be charged and tried there must be an allegation of a chargeable offense. "Chargeable offenses" (*BCO* 29-1 through 4),⁹ are "violations of divine law," or doctrines or practices contrary to the Word of God, or the Constitution of the Church. The Constitution of the Church is the *Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, and the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*.
 - Errors of judgment and relational failures may or may not rise to the level of a chargeable offense.
 - In the case of a local church member, a chargeable offense could be a violation of membership vows (*BCO* 57-5).
 - In the case of a Ruling Elder or Deacon a chargeable offense could be a violation of his ordination vows (*BCO* 24-6).
 - In the case of a Minister a chargeable offense could be a violation of his ordination vows (*BCO* 21-5).

⁸ **2. Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?**

⁹ **29-1.** An offense, the proper object of judicial process, is anything in the doctrines or practice of a Church member professing faith in Christ which is contrary to the Word of God. The *Confession of Faith* and the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms* of the Westminster Assembly, together with the formularies of government, discipline, and worship are accepted by the Presbyterian Church in America as standard expositions of the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice. Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by any court as an offense, or admitted as a matter of accusation, which cannot be proved to be such from Scripture.

29-2. Offenses are either personal or general, private or public; but all of them being sins against God, are therefore grounds of discipline.

29-3. Personal offenses are violations of the divine law, considered in the special relation of wrongs or injuries to particular individuals. General offenses are heresies or immoralities having no such relation, or considered apart from it.

29-4. Private offenses are those which are known only to a few persons. Public offenses are those which are notorious.

- Judicial process should be used only after discipleship and informal pastoral discipline have failed.
- Church discipline needs to be exercised consistently, not selectively.
- Church leaders need to be willing to discipline friends, relatives, allies, and “nice people.”
- All PCA church courts are to recognize the discipline of other PCA church courts (*BCO* 11-4).
- Other churches need to recognize discipline across denominational lines. The North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) has such an agreement; some local evangelical ministerial associations do as well. But joining another denomination is often used to avoid discipline.

Other factors in practicing discipline:

- Discipline should be exercised with humility, seriousness, discretion, self-examination, tenderness and meekness (Gal. 6:1-5; *BCO* 32-12; 36-1).
- The exercise of wisdom and discretion are necessary in discipline.
 - When reading the Book of Proverbs some individual proverbs may seem to conflict with others. But the key to understanding Proverbs (and the entire Bible) is that the appropriate action may vary. For example, it is unwise to rebuke a person who is in a fit of anger. But it is wise and appropriate to rebuke a brother, i.e., someone with whom one has a personal relationship.
 - “Exhort” (παρακαλέω, call along side, call near, call for [a purpose]) may be either to rebuke or to encourage.¹⁰ Sometimes we need to encourage people; sometimes we need to confront people.
 - There is the creative tension in the scripture between justice and righteousness on the one hand and mercy and grace on the other.
 - Part of the uniqueness of PCA polity is that:
 - The *BCO* is not written as canon law attempting to cover all details of possible situations, but to a large degree is written as a set of principles.
 - Judicial decisions in the PCA do not establish legal precedent as in the US court system.¹¹
 - “Deliverances” (study committee reports, and other actions) of the General Assembly do not establish precedent (*BCO* 14-7).
 - There is no procedure for an “authoritative interpretation of the *BCO*” in the PCA to establish a precedent.
 - PCA polity gives discretion to the lower courts as a matter of principle and of specific statement (*BCO* 39-3).¹²

¹⁰ Acts 2:40; 11:23; 14:22; 15:32; Ro. 12:8; 2 Cor. 9:5; I Thess. 2:11; 2 Thess. 3:12; I Tim. 2:1; 6:2; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9; 2:6; 2:15; Heb. 3:13; 13:22.

¹¹ **14-7.** Actions of the General Assembly pursuant to the provision of *BCO* 14-6 such as deliverances, resolutions, overtures, and judicial decisions are to be given due and serious consideration by the Church and its lower courts when deliberating matters related to such action. Judicial decisions shall be binding and conclusive on the parties who are directly involved in the matter being adjudicated, and may be appealed to in subsequent similar cases as to any principle which may have been decided. (See *BCO* 3-5 and 6, and *WCF* 31:3.)

¹² **39-3.** While affirming that the Scripture is “the supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined” (*WCF* 1.10), and that the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America is “subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the inerrant Word of God” (*BCO* Preface, III), and while affirming also that this Constitution is fallible (*WCF* 31.3), the Presbyterian Church in America affirms that this subordinate and

- Courts are given discretion on the manner (private or public) in which censures are to be inflicted (*BCO* 36).
- Restoration from discipline may be celebrated (*BCO* 37).¹³
- Some sins, errors, and behaviors, though not excusable are explainable.
- The abuse of ecclesiastical power is a constant temptation.¹⁴
- Follow specified procedures in *BCO* carefully (see Judicial Procedures check list attached).
- Care should be taken in disciplining women particularly in marital situations. Some Sessions have a woman sit in on meetings of the court to encourage and advise a woman who may be dealt with officially by the Session.¹⁵
- Ordained office bearers are held to higher standards (*BCO* 24-7; 34-2).
- Ministers are held to the highest standard (e.g. *BCO* 34-7, 8, 9).¹⁶

fallible Constitution has been “adopted by the church” (*BCO* Preface, III) “as standard expositions of the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice” (*BCO* 29-1) and as setting forth a form of government and discipline “in conformity with the general principles of biblical polity” (*BCO* 21-5.3). To insure that this Constitution is not amended, violated or disregarded in judicial process, any review of the judicial proceedings of a lower court by a higher court shall be guided by the following principles:

1. A higher court, reviewing a lower court, should limit itself to the issues raised by the parties to the case in the original (lower) court. Further, the higher court should resolve such issues by applying the Constitution of the church, as previously established through the constitutional process.
2. A higher court should ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court regarding those factual matters which the lower court is more competent to determine, because of its proximity to the events in question, and because of its personal knowledge and observations of the parties and witnesses involved. Therefore, a higher court should not reverse a factual finding of a lower court, unless there is clear error on the part of the lower court.
3. A higher court should ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court regarding those matters of discretion and judgment which can only be addressed by a court with familiar acquaintance of the events and parties. Such matters of discretion and judgment would include, but not be limited to: the moral character of candidates for sacred office, the appropriate censure to impose after a disciplinary trial, or judgment about the comparative credibility of conflicting witnesses. Therefore, a higher court should not reverse such a judgment by a lower court, unless there is clear error on the part of the lower court.
4. The higher court does have the power and obligation of judicial review, which cannot be satisfied by always deferring to the findings of a lower court. Therefore, a higher court should not consider itself obliged to exhibit the same deference to a lower court when the issues being reviewed involve the interpretation of the Constitution of the Church. Regarding such issues, the higher court has the duty and authority to interpret and apply the Constitution of the Church according to its best abilities and understanding, regardless of the opinion of the lower court.

¹³ Note particularly that *BCO* 37-3; 37-4; 37-5 state that the proceedings of restoration shall be concluded with “prayer and thanksgiving” and restoration to office additionally involves extending “the right hand of fellowship.”

¹⁴ Money (greed), sex (lust, passion), and power (gaining and abusing authority) are all alluring. The desire for and the abuse of authority is often the most enticing temptation. Diotrephes-type persons (III John 1:9-10) were a problem not only in John’s day are but in churches throughout all time and in many places.

¹⁵ See the PCA’s report on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault (DASA), *Addressing Abuse*, for further discussion of this topic.

¹⁶ **34-7.** When a minister, pending a trial, shall make confession, if the matter be base and flagitious, such as drunkenness, uncleanness, or crimes of a greater nature, however penitent he may appear to the satisfaction of all, the court shall without delay impose definite suspension or depose him from the ministry.

34-8. A minister under indefinite suspension from his office or deposed for scandalous conduct shall not be restored, even on the deepest sorrow for his sin, until he shall exhibit for a considerable time such an eminently exemplary, humble and edifying life and testimony as shall heal the wound made by his scandal. A deposed minister shall in no case be restored until it shall appear that the general sentiment of the Church is strongly in his favor, and demands his restoration; and then only by the court inflicting the censure, or with that court’s consent.

- A minister must preside when a Session conducts judicial cases (*BCO* 12-3).
- Larger churches sometimes use judicial commissions (*BCO* 15-1, 2, 3; See *Sessional Judicial Commissions*, in the Clerk of Session Handbook).
 - The Session must have specifically empowered the commission to serve as a judicial commission.
 - A minister must preside in a judicial case (*BCO* 12-3).
 - The judicial commission's decision is the final decision of the Session (*BCO* 15-3).
 - The judicial commission must submit a full statement of the case and the judgment rendered. The statement of the case and the judgment must be included in the Session's minutes (*BCO* 15-3)
 - All the rights and privileges of the accused tried before the Session as whole apply to a trial before a judicial commission.
- Keep careful records and minutes. The testimony of witness must be recorded and, if referenced in an appeal, transcribed (*BCO* 35-9). Though only the testimony is required to be recorded, the best practice is to record and transcribe the entire proceedings of the trial. Doing so assists in placing "all acts, orders, and decisions of the court relating to the case" (*BCO* 32-18) in the Record of the Case, allowing it to be cited in an appeal (*BCO* 42-5).
- When higher courts (Presbyteries and the General Assembly [through its Standing Judicial Commission]) act upon complaints brought forward and appeals,¹⁷ the appellate court does not ordinarily try a case de novo, but depends heavily on the Record of the Case. Therefore the Record of the Case needs to be detailed and preserved.
- Understand legal liabilities in continuing to prosecute a case after a person has left the church (*BCO* 38-3) and there may be liability in the public announcement of censures (*BCO* 36-3; 36-4).
- The Bible does not address every possible situation explicitly and in detail (e.g., physical abuse in marriage) or situations that have developed recently (e.g., internet pornography addiction, drug addiction). Elders have to use wisdom and discretion in applying biblical principles to specific situations.
- The *Westminster Confession* 1.6 addresses the issue of using wisdom, discretion, and deduction in governing the Church.¹⁸

Nature of the Ten Commandments

- Moral principles from which specific applications were later revealed or from which applications may be deduced.¹⁹ The Ten Commandments are apodictic laws, the case

34-9. When a minister is deposed, his pastoral relation shall be dissolved; but when he is suspended from office it shall be left to the discretion of the Presbytery whether the censure shall include the dissolution of the pastoral relation.

¹⁷ In the PCA *BCO* the term "appeal" is used only with reference to one who has undergone a trial (*BCO* 42-1), all other judicial cases brought forward to a higher court are termed "complaints" (*BCO* 43).

¹⁸ The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word: and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

laws apply apodictic laws to specific situations, but there is not a case law for every possible situation.

- A summary—a condensation of abiding moral principles.
- Covenant (Exod. 19:5; Deut. 5:2-3)—It is God’s covenant with a redeemed people, rather than a conquered people.
- Based on God’s love and grace—The prologue is, “I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Exod. 20:1; Deut. 5:6). This is statement/formula that is used over 125 times.
- Personal and individual—All Ten Commandments are singular.
- Simple negatives—Negatives are concise. Negatives zero in on our evil inclinations. For every vice, there is a corresponding virtue. Simply refraining from evil does not completely fulfill the commandments.

Limitations of church discipline:

- The judicial process itself does not change people’s hearts.
- The judicial process does not heal broken relationships.

Difficult Cases

- Marital breakdowns
- Divorces
- Teenaged misbehaviors.
- Sexual misconduct, particularly that which results in a pregnancy. Both parties should be considered.
- Child abuse perpetrators
- Internet pornography additions; internet romantic relationships, etc.
- Disputes among members involving money.
- Persons with emotional and mental disorders or with physical/biochemical disorders that affect behavior.

¹⁹ This is why the *Westminster Larger Catechism* uses the procedure in dealing with each commandment of (1) definition, (2) duties required, and (3) sins forbidden. Duties and sins are extensive.

Edited: 11/2023

Procedural Outline for Judicial Process

This outline is for informational purposes only. Though every attempt has been made to keep these accurate, the Rules of Discipline found in the *BCO* are the only binding source for the procedures to be followed.

	<i>BCO</i>	Item	Date
1.	31-1, 33-1, 34-1	Allegations received by clerk of court with jurisdiction	_____
2.	31-2	Investigation commenced	_____
2.1		Committee/Commission appointed to conduct (optional)	_____

First Meeting

The steps outlined below are the only steps that can be taken at the first meeting, unless both parties (the accused and the prosecutor) agree and any witnesses to be called are present. If both parties agree and it is practicable, the court can proceed to trial immediately (*BCO* 32-3).

	<i>BCO</i>	Item	Date
1.	31-2	Investigation conducted by court, or report of investigative committee/commission	_____
2.	31-2	Determination of “strong presumption of guilt” F.P. Ramsay: “A strong presumption means a belief by the members of the Court that the evidence as then known by them would indicate that guilt probably exists; unless evidence to the contrary can be produced not then known to them.” (pp.185f.)	_____
2.1.		If no strong presumption of guilt, formal process is over and the court may act as it deems fit for the situation.	_____
2.2.	31-2	If the court determines there is a strong presumption of guilt, process must be instituted. Morton Smith: “Once a Court has determined to enter into an investigation, then the Court no longer has discretion of not instituting a process if strong presumption of guilt appears. In other words, only if the investigation has failed to produce strong evidence of guilt, may the Court decide not to institute process. The Court may, even when believing there is no guilt, institute process for the purpose of vindicating the innocent party. Thus the Court has unlimited discretion, except when a strong presumption of guilt has been raised by the investigation. Then the Court must institute process.” (p.302)	_____
3.	15-3	Court determines whether to try case itself or appoint a judicial commission to try the case	_____
4.	31-2, 32-3.1 31-2	Prosecutor appointed to prepare the indictment and to conduct the case	_____
		- Presbytery: Prosecutor must be a member of the Presbytery; Session: prosecutor may be any communing member of the same congregation	
	31-5	- Injured parties, or those with knowledge of personal offenses, can not be prosecutors unless they have tried the means of reconciliation.	
	31-9	- Every voluntary prosecutor shall be warned that if he fail to show probable cause of the charges, he may himself be censured as a slanderer of the brethren.	

5. 31-2, 32-3.2 Indictment ordered to be drawn and a copy, with names of witnesses _____
known then to support it, served on the accused
 - 31-4 - Every indictment shall begin: "In the name of the Presbyterian Church in America," and shall conclude, "against the peace, unity and purity of the Church and the honor and majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the King and Head thereof."
 - 32-5 - The times, places, and circumstances should, if possible, be particularly stated
6. 32-3.3 Accused cited to appear and be heard at another meeting _____
32-3.1, 32-7 - No sooner than 10 days after citation (receipt of it by accused)
32-4 - Citation signed by moderator or clerk in the name of the court by order of the court
32-4 - Delivered in person or in another manner providing verification of date of receipt
7. 31-10 Court determines whether to suspend all the accused's official functions _____
(requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority)
Morton Smith: "This should be done with great caution, lest the Court be viewed as precipitate in its judgement of the accused, or in any way serve to prejudice the Court against giving him a fair hearing." (p.305)
8. 32-3 Attention called to Rules of Discipline and assistance to obtain them _____
offered
9. 32-11 Judicial committee appointed, if deemed expedient _____
 - Its duty is to digest and arrange all the papers, and to prescribe, under the direction of the court, the whole order of the proceedings
 - Members of this committee are entitled to sit and vote as members of the court

Arraignment (the Second Meeting)

- | | <i>BCO</i> | Item | Date |
|-----|------------|---|-------------|
| 1. | 32-3 | Charges read to the accused
Morton Smith: "The charge read to the accused must be identical with the written form of the indictment." (pp.309)
F.P. Ramsay: "The accused may, of course, object to the indictment, and may move that it be rejected by the Court, as not in proper form, or as being too indefinite, or he may move that it be amended so as to eliminate imperfections." (p.196) | _____ |
| 1.1 | 32-3 | Accused pleads
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accused may plead in writing, when they can not be present - If absent, accused should have counsel assigned to them F.P. Ramsay: "The accused must plead either 'guilty' or 'not guilty,' or he may plead 'guilty in part, and not guilty in part' (specifying what is admitted and what is denied)." (p.196) | _____ |
| 1.2 | 32-6 | If accused appears and refuses to plead or otherwise cooperate, he shall be dealt with for his contumacy (33-2; 34-4) | _____ |
| 1.3 | 33-2; 34-4 | If found contumacious, accused is immediately suspended from the sacraments and office
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Censure is only removed after repentance for contumacy and satisfaction in relation to the charges against him. - Censure is made public. | _____ |
| 1.4 | 32-3 | The trial is scheduled and all parties and their witnesses are cited to appear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No sooner than 14 days from such citation | _____ |

2. 32-6 If accused refuses to appear, he shall be cited a second time _____
- Accompanied with a notice that if he does not appear at the time appointed, he shall be dealt with for his contumacy (33-2; 34-4).
- 32-7 - The citation must provide sufficient time for a seasonable and convenient compliance.

The Trial

- | | <i>BCO</i> | <i>Item</i> | <i>Date</i> |
|----|----------------|---|-------------|
| 1. | 32-10 | Court ascertains that their citations have been duly served
Morton Smith: "To guarantee this, the officer of the Court citing the accused, should either have the citation served person, by at least two persons, or at least by certified mail with a signature of reception required." (pp.309) | _____ |
| 2. | 32-16 | The right of any member of the court to sit in the trial may be challenged | _____ |
| | | - Either party may challenge. | |
| | 32-17 | - Question decided by the other members of the court. | |
| | 32-17 | - Any member who expresses his opinion of the merits of the case to either party, or to any person not a member of the court shall be disqualified—applies throughout the process of the trial. | |
| | | - Any member who is absent from any sitting without the permission of the court, or satisfactory reasons rendered, shall be disqualified—applies throughout the process of the trial. | |
| 3. | 32-12, 32-15.1 | Moderator charges the court | _____ |
| | | - This is the formal beginning of the trial itself. | |
| 4. | 32-15.2 | Indictment is read
F.P. Ramsay: "The indictment may not be challenged at this point as to whether or not it is true, or whether, if true it is an offense. This is to be decided by the trial itself. If the indictment is set aside as defective, then the process is back to the point when it appointed the prosecutor, and directed an indictment to be drawn." (pp.201-204) | _____ |
| 5. | 32-15.2 | The answer of the accused is heard | _____ |
| 6. | 32-15.3 | Witnesses for the prosecutor are heard | _____ |
| | 35-7 | - No question shall be put or answered except by permission of the moderator, subject to an appeal to the court. The court shall not permit questions frivolous or irrelevant to the charge at issue. | |
| | 35-1 | - Persons who do not believe in the existence of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments are not competent as witnesses. | |
| | 35-2 | - The accused may testify but may not be compelled to. | |
| | 35-2 | - A spouse may not be compelled to testify. | |
| | 35-1 | - Either party has the right to challenge the competency of a witness, which shall be decided by the court. | |
| | 35-6 | - No witness yet to be examined, unless a member of the court, may be present during the examination of another witness, if either party objects. | |
| | 35-13 | - Members of the court called to testify may continue as judges, unless either party objects, at which time the court determines whether the member is disqualified. The member against whom the objection has been made retains the right to vote in the determination of qualification. | |
| | 35-3 | - Reasonable accommodations to prevent in-person contact with the accused may be made. | |

- | | | | |
|------|---------|---|-------|
| 6.1. | 35-8 | Oath administered by Moderator | _____ |
| 6.2. | 35-7 | Examined by the prosecutor | _____ |
| 6.3. | 35-7 | Cross-examined by the accused | _____ |
| 6.4. | 35-7 | Members of the court or either party may ask any additional questions | _____ |
| 7. | 32-15.3 | Witnesses for the defense are heard | _____ |
| | 35-7 | - No question shall be put or answered except by permission of the moderator, subject to an appeal to the court. The court shall not permit questions frivolous or irrelevant to the charge at issue. | |
| | 35-1 | - Persons who do not believe in the existence of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments are not competent as witnesses. | |
| | 35-2 | - The accused may testify but may not be compelled to. | |
| | 35-2 | - A spouse may not be compelled to testify. | |
| | 35-1 | - Either party has the right to challenge the competency of a witness, which shall be decided by the court. | |
| | 35-6 | - No witness yet to be examined, unless a member of the court, may be present during the examination of another witness, if either party objects. | |
| | 35-13 | - Members of the court called to testify may continue as judges, unless either party objects, at which time the court determines whether the member is disqualified. The member against whom the objection has been made retains the right to vote in the determination of qualification. | |
| | 35-3 | - Reasonable accommodations to prevent in-person contact with the accused may be made. | |
| 7.1. | 35-8 | Oath administered by Moderator | _____ |
| 7.2. | 35-7 | Examined by the accused | _____ |
| 7.3. | 35-7 | Cross-examined by the prosecutor | _____ |
| 7.4. | 35-7 | Members of the court or either party may ask any additional questions | _____ |
| 8. | 32-15.4 | Prosecutor is heard | _____ |
| 9. | 32-15.4 | Accused is heard | _____ |
| 10. | 32-15.4 | Prosecutor closes | _____ |
| | | F.P. Ramsay: "The prosecutor may respond to specifics that have been spoken to by the accused, but should not add any further new arguments." (pp.201-204) | |
| 11. | 32-15.5 | Roll is called and members may express their opinion | _____ |
| | | F.P. Ramsay: "This is not intended to be a discussion of the merits at this point, but to get each member of the Court to express his own views, thus giving the whole Court the benefit of the views of all." (pp.201-204) | |
| | | - The manual for the SJC states that for trials before them this is to be done in closed session (<i>OMSJC</i> 12.8). | |
| | | - The manual for the SJC that for trials before them discussion is allowed following the roll and before the vote is taken (<i>OMSJC</i> 12.8). | |
| 12. | 32-15.6 | Vote is taken | _____ |

- | | | | |
|-----|---------|--|-------|
| 13. | 32-15.6 | Verdict is announced | _____ |
| 14. | 36-1 | If found guilty, the court moves to discussion of censure | _____ |
| | 30-1 | - Admonition and definite suspension from office are for those convicted who satisfy the court as to their repentance and makes such restitution as is appropriate. These conclude the judicial process. | |
| | 30-1 | - Indefinite suspension (from office or the sacraments) shall be administered to an accused who, upon conviction, remains impenitent. | |
| | 30-5 | - Deposition from office may or may not be accompanied by another censure. | |

Other Notes

1. Disciplinary procedures are ordinarily held in executive session (RONR (12th ed), 9:24; 63:2). *Robert's Rules* has very strict limits on executive session. Among other things:
 - 1.1. Only the members of the court (in the case of a Presbytery: only the TEs and those REs who were appointed delegates of their Sessions for that meeting), the accused (and his counsel, if before a Session and not a member of the court), and the witnesses are allowed to be present unless the court gives specific permission for someone else.
 - 1.2. One who is present in such a session may not divulge information from that executive session to anyone without permission of the body.
 - 1.3. See RONR (12th ed), 9:24-27 for the description of Executive Session
2. The accused, prosecutor, and counsel for the accused do not exercise rights of judge in any discussion arising from the case (accused 31-11; counsel 32-19; prosecutor is not specifically mentioned, but it would seem to be a conflict of interest).
3. Under *BCO* 32-19, one may not hire a lawyer to represent the accused.
 - 3.1. If the trial is before a Session or Presbytery, the accused may be represented by any member in good standing of a church in the same Presbytery or by any teaching elder member of that Presbytery. Before the General Assembly, the accused may be represented by any member in good standing of the PCA (*BCO* 32-19)
 - 3.2. a member of that congregation may represent him. If an appeal is made to Presbytery, a member of that Presbytery may represent him. If before the SJC, he may be represented by any member of the PCA.
 - 3.3. A proposed amendment to *BCO* 32-19 that would allow any member of the PCA to represent anyone before any court failed.
 - 3.4. One of the first questions I asked the CCB was whether one whose profession is a lawyer could represent anyone. The CCB answered that one whose profession is a lawyer does not disqualify one from representing anyone unless 1) one is paid to be counsel, or 2) one is in an attorney-client relationship with the accused.
4. The testimony of more than one witness shall be necessary to establish any charge. Corroborative evidence may count as the second witness (*BCO* 35-4).
5. A husband or wife shall not be compelled to bear testimony against one another (*BCO* 35-2).
6. All testimony must be recorded and transcribed (*BCO* 35-9). Though only the testimony is required to be recorded, the best practice is to record and transcribe the entire proceedings of the trial. Doing so assists in placing "all acts, orders, and decisions of the court relating to the case" (*BCO* 32-18) in the Record of the Case, allowing it to be cited in an appeal (*BCO* 42-5).
7. The record of the case is defined in *BCO* 32-18.

Avoiding Procedural Errors in Judicial Cases

L. Roy Taylor, PCA Stated Clerk Emeritus¹

Having served as Stated Clerk of the PCA for more than two decades, I have noticed several recurring procedural errors as Presbyteries handle complaints, trials, cases without process, and appeals. Here are some guidelines to help Presbytery stated clerks avoid typical pitfalls.

General

- In addition to determining whether a complaint or appeal is in order, *deny* the complaint or appeal and *specify the ground(s)* and the *BCO* reference(s).²
- *Read and follow* the “Procedural Checklist for PCA *BCO* Rules of Discipline.” Most errors could be avoided by following the “Procedural Checklist for PCA *BCO* Rules of Discipline.”
- Give or transmit a copy of the “Procedural Checklist for PCA *BCO* Rules of Discipline” (Clerks Handbook 070-B) to clerks of session handling judicial matters.
- Give or transmit a copy of the “Procedural Checklist for PCA *BCO* Rules of Discipline” to Presbytery judicial commissions, especially the chairman of the commission.
- Ideally, the moderator of a Presbytery should be elected because he knows the rules, RONR (12th ed.) 47:6 and is able to preside at a meeting efficiently. However, many times the moderator is elected in order to honor a man, or because he is an elder of a certain category.
- The Stated Clerk of Presbytery is usually the parliamentarian of Presbytery and is expected to be knowledgeable of the *BCO*, the Standing Rules of Presbytery, and *Robert’s Rules*. The Stated Clerk of Presbytery will need to advise the moderator, especially in judicial proceedings.
- In judicial cases, courts must be careful to distinguish between judicial decisions and pastoral advice. Judicial decisions should focus on judicial issues. It is unwise for members of a Shepherding Committee dealing with a situation to serve on a judicial commission dealing with the same situation.
- The SJC has never received a perfectly conducted case with a perfect Record of the Case (ROC). The SJC looks for *reversible* errors that are clearly unconstitutional.
- A definite suspension is analogous to a jail sentence; once it is completed, the definite suspension ends (*BCO* 37-1). If a court is unsure of the genuineness of the repentance of the accused, the court should impose indefinite suspension (*BCO* 36-5; 37-3).
- The SJC bases its decisions on the PCA Constitution and the Record of the Case (*BCO* 32-18; *RAO* 17-1; *OMSJC* 7; 10.8 b.). Briefs must reference the ROC (*OMSJC* 8.3). Therefore, it is of utmost importance to have a full and complete Record of the Case.
- SJC members are restricted to dealing with the issues that were raised by the parties to the case in the lower court(s) (*BCO* 39-3.1). Therefore, parties to cases should ensure that they have raised any important issues in the lower court(s) before it goes to the SJC.
- Both *BCO* 34-10 and 38-2 may apply to Ruling Elders and Deacons.

¹ Updated by the Stated Clerk’s Office, November 2025.

² For example, do not simply say the complaint is not in order. State in the minutes, the Presbytery found that the complaint was not in order and denied the complaint because the complainant had not first presented his complaint to the session in a timely manner (*BCO* 43-3). Do not simply say that the appeal is out of order, say in the minutes that the appeal is not in order and is denied because the appellant did not submit to a regular trial (*BCO* 42-20).

Trials

- If a session uses a judicial commission to conduct a trial, the moderator of the commission must be a minister (*BCO* 12-3).
- A chargeable offense is anything contrary both to the Bible and the PCA Constitution (*BCO* 29-1). Take care when trying a person on an interpretation of the Bible that is not addressed in the PCA Constitution. Officers are held to a higher standard (*BCO* 21-5; 24-6) than individual members (*BCO* 57-5).
- Advise parties that the *BCO* is available online (*BCO* 32-2) <https://www.pcaac.org/bco/>
- Members of a court of original jurisdiction and the judicial commission should familiarize themselves with “Procedural Checklist for PCA *BCO* Rules of Discipline.”
- At least ten days must elapse between citation of the accused and the next meeting of the court or commission (*BCO* 32-3; 32-7).
- The accused may plead in writing if he cannot be present at the second meeting of the court (*BCO* 32-3).
- If the accused refuses to appear the second time, he or she may be dealt with for contumacy (*BCO* 32-6; 33-2; 34-4). However, the court may convict the accused of contumacy only, not the original charge on which he was indicted.
- Any member of the court who has expressed an opinion regarding the merits of the case before the court or does not attend the meetings of the court shall be disqualified from sitting as a judge (*BCO* 32-17).
- Under *BCO* 32-19, one may not hire a lawyer to represent the accused.
 - If the trial is before a Session or Presbytery, the accused may be represented by any member in good standing of a church in the same Presbytery or by any teaching elder member of that Presbytery. Before the General Assembly, the accused may be represented by any member in good standing of the PCA (*BCO* 32-19)
 - a member of that congregation may represent him. If an appeal is made to Presbytery, a member of that Presbytery may represent him. If before the SJC, he may be represented by any member of the PCA.
 - A proposed amendment to *BCO* 32-19 that would allow any member of the PCA to represent anyone before any court failed.
 - One of the first questions I asked the CCB was whether one whose profession is a lawyer could represent anyone. The CCB answered that one whose profession is a lawyer does not disqualify one from representing anyone unless 1) one is paid to be counsel, or 2) one is in an attorney-client relationship with the accused.
- Witnesses must be of proper age [that is not defined] and intelligence [not defined] and believe in God and a future state of rewards and punishment (*BCO* 35-1).
- The accused is not required to testify (*BCO* 35-1).
- A husband or wife is not required to testify against one’s spouse (*BCO* 35-2).
- Witnesses may not hear other witnesses’ testimony if either party objects (*BCO* 35-6).
- Both parties to a case have the right to cross-examine witnesses (*BCO* 35-7).
- Only the testimony of witnesses needs to be reduced to writing, not the entire proceedings of the trial (*BCO* 35-9). Though only the testimony is required to be recorded, the best practice is to record and transcribe the entire proceedings of the trial. Doing so assists in placing “all acts, orders, and decisions of the court relating to the case” (*BCO* 32-18) in the Record of the Case, allowing it to be cited in an appeal (*BCO* 42-5).
- The prosecutor does not have a vote in the trial (*BCO* 35-13).
- When a member of a church court is under process (trial or appeal), his official functions may be suspended but not as a censure (*BCO* 31-10).
- A defendant in a case shall not sit as a judge in his own case (*BCO* 31-11).
- When a church member is under process, the Session may prevent the accused from approaching the Lord’s Table until the charges against him may be examined (*BCO* 33-4).

Appeals

- One may only appeal a conviction; one may not appeal a charge on which one has been found not guilty (*BCO 42-1*).
- Only the convicted person may appeal his conviction; no one else may appeal on his or her behalf (*BCO 42-2*).
- Only one who has submitted to a trial or has been divested without censure under *BCO 34-10* are entitled to an appeal (*BCO 42-2*). In a case without process (*BCO 38-1*), the offender may appeal the censure only.
- *BCO 42-3* lists grounds for an appeal, but it does not exclude other grounds.
- The accused/appellant needs to be informed of the decision of the court regarding his appeal (*BCO 42-4*). The clock does not start until the accused/appellant has been notified of the decision of the court or unless the court has made a good-faith effort to communicate the decision to the accused/appellant in the methods specified in *BCO 42-4*.
- Neither party (the accused/appellant nor appellee) may circularize the court (*BCO 42-4*). Circularizing the court is seeking to influence the opinions and decisions of members of the court before the case is considered.
- Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until it has been decided by the higher court (*BCO 42-6*).
- When a member of a church court is under process (trial or appeal), his official functions may be suspended but not as a censure (*BCO 31-10*).
- No complaint is allowable in a judicial case in which an appeal is pending (*BCO 43-1*).

Complaints

- One must have standing to file a complaint, *BCO 43-1*.
 - The SJC has held that a TE is always a member of Presbytery, but an RE only has standing to file a complaint when an action was taken at a Presbytery meeting at which he was a commissioner (*BCO 13-1*).
 - Only the complainant may take his complaint to a higher court (*BCO 43-3*). Someone else may not take a complaint that was not his own to a higher court.
- One must file a complaint within the specified timeframe: sixty (60) days following the meeting of the court of original jurisdiction (*BCO 43-2*) or thirty (30) days after the notification of the decision by the higher court (*BCO 43-3*).
- Neither party (the complainant nor the respondent) may circularize the court (*BCO 43-2*). Circularizing the court is seeking to influence the opinions and decisions of members of the court before the case is considered.
- When elevating a complaint to a higher court, the complainant must file with the stated clerk of the higher court the same complaint that was filed with the stated clerk of the lower court and denied by the lower court (*BCO 43-3*). There are three purposes for this requirement,
 - To give the court of original jurisdiction an opportunity to change its ruling.
 - To ensure that the complainant does not add to his original complaint.
 - To ensure that the higher court evaluates the case on the basis of the Record of the Case.
- The complainant needs to be informed of the decision of the court regarding his complaint (*BCO 43-3*). The clock does not start until the complainant has been notified of the decision of the court or unless the court has made a good-faith effort to communicate the decision to the complainant in the methods specified in *BCO 43-3*.
- Notice of complaint (unlike notice of an appeal) does not have the effect of suspending the matter complained against, unless there is a motion approved by at least one-third of those who were present for the original action being complained about (*BCO 43-4*).

Cases without Process

- The moderator, clerk, and members of the judicial commission should review the document, “Procedures for a Case without Process, *BCO* 38-1,” found in your Presbytery Clerk’s Handbook (071-B).
- The Moderator should explain the procedures of *BCO* 38-1 to the court before the court considers the case without process.
- Often, a person who has been the subject of a *BCO* 31-2 investigation may opt for a case without process under *BCO* 38-1. If there has been a *BCO* 31-2 investigation before a *BCO* 38-1 procedure, do not have the *BCO* 31-2 committee or commission report first because that would violate the *BCO* 38-1 rights of the self-accused person that only the statement of facts that he has approved and the sins to which he confesses may be used by the court to decide on a censure.
- It is unwise for a Shepherding Committee to report prior to a *BCO* 38-1 procedure, because that would violate the *BCO* 38-1 rights of the self-accused person that only the statement of facts that he has approved and the sins to which he confesses may be used by the court to decide on a censure.
- A "Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt" (such as Clerks Handbook 071-B 4) must be signed by the accused and the court before the court renders a judgment (*BCO* 38-1). That will become part of the Record of the Case if a complaint is filed.
- If the offense is a personal offense, the court must invite the person who was wronged or injured by the sin to review and comment on the written Confession before it is approved by the court and the accused. The court is to take the wronged person’s comments into account as it determines whether the written Confession is accurate and sufficient.
- It is wise to have the person sign a "Voluntary Statement in Addition to the Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt" (Clerks Handbook 071-B 5) before the court renders a judgment. That will become part of the Record of the Case if a complaint is filed.
- It is wise to give a copy of “Information for Persons Agreeing to a Case without Process under *BCO* 38-1” (Clerks Handbook 071-B 6) to the self-accused before the proceedings.
- The person has the right of appeal (*BCO* 38-1). That does not mean he may retract his guilty plea; it only means he may complain against the severity of the censure (*BCO* 42-2).

Requesting an Investigation or Filing Charges against a Church Member, Church Officer, or Minister

L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk Emeritus PCA

There is no form appended to the *Book of Church Order* for one to use in requesting a Session to investigate a church member, Deacon, or Ruling Elder or for one to use in requesting a Presbytery to investigate a Teaching Elder (Minister). Note that *BCO* Appendix G is for the use of a Session or Presbytery to use after the Session or Presbytery has conducted an investigation under *BCO* 31-2 and has found a strong presumption of guilt and instituted judicial process. This information given below may be helpful.

Cautions regarding Making Allegations or Filing Charges

- Requesting a judicial investigation is a serious matter and is not to be done quickly or lightly.
- A church court is to exercise great caution in receiving accusations from anyone known to have a malignant spirit towards the accused; from one who is not of good character, from one who is under censure or judicial process; from one who is deeply interested in any respect in the conviction of the accused; or from anyone who is known to be litigious, rash, or highly imprudent (*BCO* 31-8).
- A person who becomes a voluntary prosecutor, i.e., one who volunteers to serve as the prosecutor of charges he has made himself may face charges of slander, if he fails to show probable cause (*BCO* 31-9).
- Scandalous charges ought not be brought against ministers on slight grounds (*BCO* 34-2)

Personal and General Offenses (*BCO* 31-5; 31-6; 31-7)

- Personal offense is an individual Christian's sinning against another individual Christian. When a personal offense has been committed one may elect to forgive or overlook the offense, or else one should follow the instructions of our Lord and seek to work out the situation personally (Matthew 18:15-16).
- A general offense is a sin or serious violation of the PCA Constitution (the *Westminster Standards* together with the *Book of Church Order*) that is injurious to the honor of religion, i.e., the holiness of the Church.
- A church court may judicially investigate personal offenses as if they were general offenses when the interests of religion seem to demand it.
- When a church court institutes prosecution for a general offense, the Matthew 18 process is not required.

Chargeable Offenses (*BCO* 29-1 through 4; 39-3)

- In order for a member or officer of the PCA to be charged and tried there must either be an allegation of a chargeable offense or a charge is filed (*BCO* 31-2; 32-2). Errors of judgment and relational failures may or may not rise to the level of a chargeable offense. "Chargeable offenses" (*BCO* 29-1 through 4), are "violations of divine law," or doctrines or practices contrary to the Word of God, or the Constitution of the Church. The Constitution of the Church is *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, and *The Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms*. See also *BCO* 39-3.
- In the case of a local church member, a chargeable offense could also be a violation of membership vows (*BCO* 57-5).

- In the case of a Ruling Elder or Deacon a chargeable offense could also be a violation of his ordination vows (*BCO* 24-6).
- In the case of a Minister a chargeable offense could also be a violation of his ordination vows (*BCO* 21-5).
- Note that the ordination vows a Deacon, Ruling Elder, or Teaching Elder (Minister) takes are greater than those an individual member takes. Officers are held to a higher standard.

Filing with the Court of Original Jurisdiction

- In the case of a local church member, Ruling Elder, or Deacon, allegations or charges should be filed with the Clerk of Session of the church of which the person, Deacon, or Ruling Elder is a member, not the Presbytery or General Assembly.
- Ministers are members of Presbytery, not members of a local church. Allegations or charges against a minister should be filed with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of which he is a member, not the Session or General Assembly.

Investigation of Allegations or Charges

- In either instance, the court of original jurisdiction (Session for local church members, Deacons, and Ruling Elders, and Presbytery for ministers) shall conduct a preliminary investigation (*BCO* 31-2) of allegations that are made and charges that are brought and determine if there is a “strong presumption of guilt of the party involved.”
- If there is a “strong presumption of guilt of the party involved” the “court shall institute process, and shall appoint a prosecutor to conduct the case.”
- If there is no “strong presumption of guilt of the party involved,” the matter is ended, unless there is a complaint.

Form of Allegations or Charges

- Allegations or charges should not be vague.
- Allegations or charges should be as specific as possible as to the nature of the sin or constitutional violation, citing instances, dates, circumstances, persons who witnessed alleged offenses, or who have pertinent information, along with evidence and documentation that substantiate the allegations or charges.
- References to specific applicable portions of the Scripture, *Westminster Standards* or *Book of Church Order* should be included.
- When dealing with alleged violations of the Ten Commandments, the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Qq. 98-151, are helpful.

The Office of the Stated Clerk may give advice and counsel regarding constitutional and procedural matters. Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, “The Rules of Assembly Operation,” “The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission,” and/or *Robert’s Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA or staff members of the Office of the Stated Clerk are for information only, however, and are not authoritative rulings that may only be made by the courts of the Church. Responses to inquiries are based on information supplied by the inquirer, which may not necessarily be comprehensive. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not represent parties in ecclesiastical judicial cases and may not prepare judicial cases for parties. Parties to potential cases or cases in process are responsible for their own constitutional and procedural knowledge and understanding. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not give legal advice. When legal advice is needed, professional legal counsel should be secured from one familiar with applicable laws and regulations.



TIMELINE FOR HANDLING A COMPLAINT OR APPEAL ARISING FROM A PRESBYTERY

1. Cases are filed with both the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery and the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly within 30 days of the notification of notification of Presbytery's decision (BCO 42-4; 43-3).
2. Upon receipt of the complaint or appeal, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly requests the Record of the Case (ROC) from the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery (BCO 32-18; 35-9 and 10; 42-5; 43-6; Operating Manual of the SJC [OMSJC] 7).
3. The Stated Clerk of Presbytery has 30 days in which to submit the ROC (BCO 42-5; 43-6)
4. Upon receipt of the preliminary ROC, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly submits the ROC to the officers of the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) for a determination on whether the case is administratively in order, (OMSJC 9.1). There is no exact timeframe specified in the OMSJC for how long the SJC officers have to take action.
5. If the case is not administratively in order but can be put in order, the SJC will notify the parties of such and request that it be put in order. The appellant or complainant has 15 days from such notification to file a review brief. The Respondent may file a responsive brief withing 15 days of the first review brief (OMSJC 9.2).
6. If the case is determined by the officers to be administratively in order, it is assigned to a judicial panel (OMSJC 9.5, 10.1-3; RAO 17.3).
7. Within 10 days of receiving the ROC, the panel has an initial meeting to organize itself (OMSJC 10.4).
8. Within 30 days of receiving the ROC, the panel determines if the case is judicially in order (OMSJC 10.5).
9. Disputes over the ROC may take 55 days or longer (OMSJC 7.4).
10. If the case is not judicially in order, the parties have 30 days to put the case in order (OMSJC 10.6).
11. If the case is judicially in order, 40 days notice is given to the parties for a date of a hearing. But the 40-day period may be decreased if both parties agree in writing. Within the 40-day period prior to the hearing, briefs are filed by the deadlines specified (OMSJC 10.7 and §8).
12. The hearing may be 1) in person, 2) via electronic conference (OMSJC 10.7.a), or 3) by written brief (BCO 42-11; 43-7) with a party giving written notice to do so.
13. The panel has 40 days after the hearing within which to render a proposed and recommended decision (OMSJC 10.10).
14. Upon receipt of the proposed and recommended decision, the Stated Clerk immediately sends a copy to the parties and each member of the SJC (OMSJC 10.11).
15. Within 14 days of receiving the Panel's proposed and recommended decision, the parties may:
 - a. file a supplemental brief setting forth errors the party believes were made in the proposed and recommended decision (OMSJC 8.3)
 - b. request a hearing before the full SJC (OMSJC 17.5)

16. The case may either be reheard by the entire SJC (OMSJC 9.3; 11; 17.7) or reviewed by the full SJC for final action (OMSJC 17.8) at its fall meeting (third week of October) or its spring meeting (first week of March, OMSJC 4.1).

There are several ways a case could be delayed by either or both parties. But there are several ways the cases could be expedited toward a proposed and recommended decision by a judicial panel.

1. The SJC officers could act quickly on determining a case to be administratively in order (OMSJC 9.1) as soon as the ROC is received.
2. One judicial panel could deal with multiple cases dealing with the same situation (OMSJC 18.3 a).
3. The judicial panel could combine its constituting and initial meetings into one meeting (OMSJC 10.5).
4. If both parties agreed upon the ROC quickly, time would be saved.
5. The 40-day notice for a hearing could be shortened by the written agreement of both parties (OMSJC 10.7 b.).
6. The hearing could be conducted by written brief (BCO 42-11; 43-7) with a party giving written notice to do so.
7. After the hearing, the judicial panel could take less than 20 days to render a written decision (OMSJC 10.10) depending on factors such as the complexity of the case.

Procedures for a Case without Process

BCO 38-1

L. Roy Taylor, PCA Stated Clerk Emeritus¹

Differences between Cases with Process & Cases without Process

Cases with Process

- *BCO 31-2* investigation resulting in a strong presumption of guilt to a chargeable offense (*BCO 29-1*).
- Full trial procedures, process, standards of evidence, prosecutor, defender, witnesses, etc., resulting in a verdict of guilty or not guilty.
- Upon conviction, a guilty person may appeal to a higher court concerning both the guilty verdict and the censure imposed and may cite several bases for appeal (*BCO 42-1, 2, 3, and 4*).
- Notice of appeal has effect of suspending the judgment (*BCO 42-6*), i.e., holding the censure in abeyance until the appeal is settled by the higher court.

Cases without Process (*BCO 38-1*)

- Person comes forward and makes a "confession of guilt" (Cf. *BCO 29-1*)
- No full trial procedures, process, standards of evidence, prosecutor, defender, witnesses, etc., because the person makes a "confession of guilt."
- After the court had rendered a judgment (i.e., imposed a censure), the person may file an appeal concerning the judgment, *BCO 38-1; 42* (i.e. against censure that was imposed based on his confession of guilt). In making such appeal, he is not retracting his confession of guilt.
- Filing an appeal suspends the censure, but the court of original jurisdiction may (by a 2/3 majority vote) remove them from their duties and/or the Lord's Table. (*BCO 42-6*).

Procedural Checklist for Cases without Process

	Date or N/A	Initials	Item	BCO #
1.			Person comes forward and makes known his offense to the court.	38-1; 29-1
2.			A written Confession —i.e., a sufficient summary of the facts, the person's specific confession, and any expression or evidence of repentance—is prepared. It is wise to be as specific and concise as possible, including references to Scripture and the PCA Constitution.	38-1; 29-1

¹ Updated by the Stated Clerk's Office, October 2024.

3.			If the offense is a personal offense (BCO 29-3), the court shall attempt to inform the offended person(s) of that part of the Confession the court deems pertinent to the offense against him or her. The court shall invite the offended person to provide the court comment on the Confession prior to final approval of the Confession by the confessor and the court. The court shall encourage the offended person to enlist the help of an advisor in preparing any such comments. In all instances, the court shall report the way such offended persons were informed of the parts of the Confession pertinent to them.	29-3; 38-1
4.			The court and the accused approve the written Confession , declaring that he intends to make a confession of guilt, that the Confession is accurate, and that he permits the court to render a judgment (impose a censure) without process based on his confession. The written Confession is signed by both the accused and the court.	38-1
5.			No other information may be presented without written consent from the accused and the court , and this prohibition includes individuals, prosecutors, committees, and commissions. Therefore, it is wise for the court to have the person certify in writing that he wishes to make a statement to the court and that he gives his permission for the court to use his statement as a basis for judgment (imposition of censure).	38-1
6.			It is appropriate that the moderator remind the court of their responsibilities (Gal. 6:1). Disciplinary procedures ordinarily are conducted in executive session.	32-12 and 15-1 may be adapted to the occasion.
7.			The court decides whether the person is repentant and is making such restitution as is appropriate to the offenses to which he has made a confession of guilt.	30-1
8.			If the person is a minister , and the court considers the offenses to which he has confessed to be base (vile, contemptible) and flagitious (heinous, extraordinarily wicked, flagrantly wicked), the court must immediately impose either the censure of definite suspension from office or the censure of deposition from office . Such censure is administered by the moderator in closed session or open session of the court.	34-7; 30-1; 30-3; 36-4; 36-7
9.			The court deliberates as to whether a censure is called for, which censures are available, and which censures are appropriate to the case.	38-1; 30; 36
10.			If, in the opinion of the court, the person is repentant and makes such restitution as is appropriate , the censure of admonition may be imposed. Such censure may be administered in private by a member of the court or in the presence of the court by the moderator.	30-1; 30-2; 36-3

11.			If, in the opinion of the court, the person is repentant and makes such restitution as is appropriate , the censure of definite suspension from office may be imposed, when the credit of religion, the honor of Christ, and the good of the penitent require it. Such censure is administered in closed session or open session of the court.	30-1; 30-3; 36-4
12.			If, in the opinion of the court, the person remains impenitent or has not made appropriate restitution , even though he has made a confession of guilt, the court may impose the censure of indefinite suspension from the sacrament (There is no definite suspension from the sacrament, <i>BCO</i> 30-3). Such censure is administered in closed session or open session of the court with added solemnity.	30-1; 30-3; 36-5
13.			If, in the opinion of the court, the person who is a deacon, ruling elder, or minister remains impenitent or has not made appropriate restitution , even though he has made a confession of guilt, the court may impose the censure of indefinite suspension from office . Such censure is administered in closed session or open session of the court with added solemnity.	30-1; 30-3; 36-5 (See also 34-8 for a minister)
14.			If, in the opinion of the court, the person remains impenitent or has not made appropriate restitution , even though he has made a confession of guilt, the court may impose the censure of excommunication . Such censure is administered in closed session or open session of the court, or in public by the moderator	30-1; 30-4; 36-6
15.			If, in the opinion of the court, the person who is a deacon, ruling elder, or minister remains impenitent or has not made appropriate restitution , even though he has made a confession of guilt, the court may impose the censure of deposition from office . Such censure is administered by the moderator.	30-1; 30-5; 36-7

Sample

**Required Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt
for a BCO 38-1 Case without Process**

I [insert name] agree that the following statement of facts is accurate:

[List accurately and concisely the actions, statements, or attitudes to which the person is making a confession of guilt. Cite circumstances, events, and dates as may be relevant and appropriate. Cite scriptural references or quotations that are applicable. Cite sections of the *Westminster Standards* or the *Book of Church Order* that are applicable. *The Westminster Larger Catechism* is particularly helpful in this regard in its exposition of the Ten Commandments, *WLC* 91-151].

I confess that I am guilty of the sins of [list].

I confess that I am guilty of violating the PCA constitution [cite sections] by [cite offenses committed].

I affirm that I intend to make a confession of guilt as specified above.

I grant my permission for the [Session of _____ or Presbytery of _____], to whose oversight I am subject, to use the statement of facts to which I have agreed and the confession of guilt which I have made to render a judgment and impose whatever censure or censures the church court considers to be appropriate in my case.

I realize that, though I may not appeal to a higher church court regarding my confession of guilt which I am making (*Book of Church Order* 42-2) because I have not submitted to a regular trial, I do, nevertheless, retain the right to file an appeal regarding the judgment (censure or censures) that this church court may impose (*Book of Church Order* 38-1).

Signed (accused): _____ Date: _____

Signed (for the court): _____ Date: _____

Sample

**Permission Form for a Voluntary Statement in Addition to the Required
Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt for a BCO 38-1 Case without
Process**

I [insert name] hereby indicate my desire to make a statement to the [Session of _____ or Presbytery of _____], to whose oversight I am subject, for its consideration in determining the censure or censures in my case without process (*Book of Church Order* 38-1). The statement I wish to make is in addition to the written Confession which I have approved in my case without process presently being considered.

Moreover, I give my consent to the church court to which I am subject to use the statements I make in the presence of the court as a basis of judgment without process.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Signed (for the court): _____ Date: _____

Information for Persons Agreeing to a Case without Process under BCO 38-1²

L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk Emeritus, PCA

You have chosen to come forward and make known your offense(s) to the Elders to whom you are spiritually accountable. The following is intended to help you understand what is expected of you, the procedures that will take place and the options available to you and to the Elders functioning as a church court under *Book of Church Order* 38-1.

Be aware of the differences between a Case with Process (undergoing a trial) and a Case without Process.

Differences between Cases with Process & Cases without Process

Cases with Process

- BCO 31-2 investigation resulting in a strong presumption of guilt to a chargeable offense (BCO 29-1).
- Full trial procedures, process, standards of evidence, prosecutor, defender, witnesses, etc., resulting in a verdict of guilty or not guilty.
- Upon conviction, a guilty person may appeal to a higher court concerning both the guilty verdict and the censure imposed and may cite several bases for appeal (BCO 42-1, 2, 3, and 4).
- Notice of appeal has effect of suspending the judgment (BCO 42-6), i.e., holding the censure in abeyance until the appeal is settled by the higher court.

Cases without Process (BCO 38-1)

- Person comes forward and makes a “confession of guilt” (Cf. BCO 29-1)
- No full trial procedures, process, standards of evidence, prosecutor, defender, witnesses, etc., because the person makes a “confession of guilt.”
- After the court had rendered a judgment (i.e. imposed a censure), the person may file an appeal concerning the judgment, BCO 38-1; 42 (i.e. against censure that was imposed based on his confession of guilt). In making such appeal, he is not retracting his “confession of guilt.”
- Filing an appeal suspends the censure but the court of original jurisdiction may (by a 2/3 majority vote) remove them from their duties and/or the Lord’s Table. (BCO 42-6).

² **Book of Church Order 38-1.** When any person shall come forward and make his offense known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the presence of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process except by his consent. In the event a confession is intended, a written Confession (i.e., a sufficient summary of the facts, the person’s specific confession, and any expression or evidence of repentance) must be approved by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment, and the co-signed document shall be appended to the minutes (regular or executive session). No other information may be presented without written consent from the accused and the court, and this prohibition includes individuals, prosecutors, committees, and commissions. A censured person has the right to appeal (BCO 42). The person has the right to be assisted by counsel at any point, in accord with the stipulations of BCO 32-19.

A procedure in a case without process under *BCO* 38-1 is a disciplinary procedure, under the *Book of Church Order*, Part II, the “Rules of Discipline.” This is a serious matter. It is not simply your elders giving you pastoral advice. In coming forward and acknowledging an “offense,” you are not merely saying that you have said or done something that may have caused someone somehow to be offended, or that you simply exercised poor judgment; you are admitting to an offense as defined in the *Book of Church Order*³, which is why there is a “confession of guilt.” You are to certify to the church court that you intend to make a confession of guilt.

In a *BCO* 38-1 case without process several items will be used as the bases for the elders to decide whether a censure should be imposed against you and what the censure should be:

1. A Statement of Facts that is required
2. A Confession of Guilt that is required
3. An Additional Statement to the Church Court that you may elect to make.

The church court (the Session for church members or the Presbytery for ministers) will prepare a Statement of Facts regarding the offense(s) concerning which you are making a confession of guilt. In order for the church court to proceed, you will be informed of the Statement of Facts and you will need to approve the Statement of Facts for the records of the church court. The Statement of Facts will list accurately and concisely the actions, statements, or attitudes to which you are making a confession of guilt. It will cite circumstances, events, and dates as may be relevant and appropriate, and it will cite scriptural references or quotations that are applicable, as well as sections of the *Westminster Standards* or the *Book of Church Order* that are applicable. You will be asked to certify that the Statement of Facts is accurate and that you give your permission to the church court to use the Statement of Facts as a basis for imposing a censure.

You will be asked to make a Confession of Guilt for the records of the church court based on the Statement of Facts that lists the specific offenses to which you are admitting guilt. You will be asked to certify to the church court that you intend to make a Confession of Guilt and that you give your permission to the church court to use your Confession of Guilt as a basis for imposing a censure.

In addition to the Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt, which are required, you may want to make an Additional Statement to the Church Court. If you want to make an Additional Statement to the Church Court, you will be asked to certify for the records of the church court that you give the church court permission to use your Additional Statement as basis for a judgment in your case.

³ **29-1.** An offense, the proper object of judicial process, is anything in the doctrines or practice of a Church member professing faith in Christ which is contrary to the Word of God. The *Confession of Faith* and the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms* of the Westminster Assembly, together with the formularies of government, discipline, and worship are accepted by the Presbyterian Church in America as standard expositions of the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice. Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by any court as an offense, or admitted as a matter of accusation, which cannot be proved to be such from Scripture

Sometimes Sessions and often Presbyteries have Shepherding Committees or the equivalent that may make a recommendation to the church court regarding whether a censure should be imposed or what the censure should be. The church court will take such recommendations into account but is not required to follow such recommendations.

A basic principle of biblical justice is that the censure(s) should be appropriate to the offense(s). There are several censures available for the church court to impose (see *BCO* Chapter 30, *Church Censures*). These include admonition (a censure available only in the case of repentant persons), definite suspension from office for a specified period of time (if a Deacon, Ruling Elder, or Minister), indefinite suspension from Communion,⁴ indefinite suspension from office (if a Deacon, Ruling Elder, or Minister), and deposition from office (if a Deacon, Ruling Elder, or Minister) or also excommunication. Though there are some procedures specified in the *Book of Church Order* 38-1 regarding a case without process, the church court, in deciding whether a censure is needed and what censure or censures to impose, will need to exercise its wisdom and discretion in accordance with the general principles of Scripture and the parameters of the PCA Constitution.

In the case of Ministers some special rules apply (see *BCO* Chapter 34). Since, in some respects, ministers are held to a higher standard, some offenses are more strongly censured (*BCO* 34-7).

Though you are coming forward and making your offense(s) known to the church court, the elders who decide your case will seek to discern whether you are repentant and that have made or are making appropriate restitution when necessary. Repentance involves 1) a sincere admission of and sorrow for sin, 2) a personal appropriation of the grace and mercy of Christ, and 3) a renewed purpose and endeavor to live your life in loving obedience to Christ (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 15-2). Just as the Lord Jesus explained sin to be more than outward actions (for example, Matthew 5:21-48), so the Church understands sin in the same manner. The *Westminster Larger Catechism*'s explanation of the Moral Law will be helpful to you in this regard (*WLC* 91-151).

Just as John preached, “Bear fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matthew 3:8), so the Church calls upon people to “repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance” (Acts 26:20). Making restitution for our sins is not a meritorious work that earns us forgiveness from God or restoration by the Church; it is a means of our demonstrating the genuineness of our repentance and our seeking to repair the damage our sins may have caused. This is why the elders who decide your case will seek to discern whether you are repentant and that have made or are making appropriate restitution when necessary.

Disciplinary procedures are ordinarily held in executive session. This means that if a Session is conducting the case, the only people present are the members of that

⁴ Indefinite suspension from the sacrament or from office is used when the church court does not think that the person is truly repentant and may be lifted when the person comes to repentance. An unrepentant person should not receive communion. There is no censure of definite suspension from communion, since repentant persons may receive communion and communion, properly received, is a means of grace.

particular church Session and the person making confession, unless the Session gives specific permission for others to be present. If a Presbytery is conducting the case, the only people present are Ministers who are members of that particular Presbytery, Ruling Elders who have been elected to be commissioners to that particular meeting of the Presbytery, and the person making confession, unless the Presbytery gives specific permission for others to be present. After the Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt are presented, and after the Additional Statement, if any, is made, then you will be dismissed from the room while the church court discusses your case and decides on a censure. You will then be asked to return and you will be informed of the censure.

If after the case is concluded, you think that the censure(s) imposed upon you was (were) disproportionately severe to your offense(s), you may file **an appeal** with reasons against the judgment (i.e. the censure(s), **(BCO 38-1; BCO 42)**). In so doing you are not retracting the Statement of Facts to which you agreed or the Confession of Guilt which you made, or the Additional Statement you may have made. You are complaining that the censure(s) was (were) too severe. You will need to file your appeal within thirty (30) days of the decision of the church court. File the appeal with the Stated Clerk of the church court that imposed the censure. If church court fails to consider your properly filed appeal by its next stated meeting or denies your appeal, you may carry your appeal forward to the next higher church court.

In exercising discipline, the Church, among other things, is concerned for “the spiritual good of offenders themselves” (BCO 27-3) and “acts the part of a tender mother, correcting her children for their good, that every one of them may be presented faultless in the day of the Lord Jesus” (BCO 27-4). A goal of discipline is the restoration of the offender (BCO Chapter 37, *The Removal of Censure*). The Elders of the church court that impose the censure(s) will work with you to bring about the removal of any censure(s) they may consider appropriate to your case, as you make spiritual progress through repentance and your using means of grace (the Word of God, prayer, and Communion) that God has provided for our spiritual benefit.

The Office of the Stated Clerk may give advice and counsel regarding constitutional and procedural matters. Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, “The Rules of Assembly Operation,” “The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission,” and/or *Robert’s Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA or staff members of the Office of the Stated Clerk are for information only, however, and are not authoritative rulings that may only be made by the courts of the Church. Responses to inquiries are based on information supplied by the inquirer, which may not necessarily be comprehensive. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not represent parties in ecclesiastical judicial cases and may not prepare judicial cases for parties. Parties to potential cases or cases in process are responsible for their own constitutional and procedural knowledge and understanding. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not give legal advice. When legal advice is needed, professional legal counsel should be secured from one familiar with applicable laws and regulations.

JOHN P. TUCKER, JR.
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OF COUNSEL
JAMES OSTENSON

To:

From: Jim Ostenson

Date: November 30, 1988

Re: Legal considerations in church discipline

1. Of the numerous lawsuits that have been filed by disciplined church members and church staff, there have been four primary causes:

- a. Inconsistency by a church in exercising discipline—disciplining some, while ignoring the discipline of others.
- b. Abuse by churches of the discipline process—spreading gossip, failing to follow established procedures, etc.
- c. Failure by churches to communicate with members about the role of discipline in the life of the church, so that members do not know in advance that they may be subject to discipline.
- d. Society's emphasis on the rights of the individual.

2. There is no guaranteed method of avoiding a lawsuit, but the following are recommendations for churches in practicing church discipline:

- a. Give notice that the church practices discipline
 - (1) In church bylaws.
 - (2) In formal written membership covenants.
 - (3) As part of church membership training – provide a written Biblical statement as part of membership materials.
 - (4) As a subject of preaching and teaching.
- b. Make sure the church is consistent in its practice of discipline, even when a potential case is particularly awkward.
- c. Determine the church's disciplinary procedures in advance of needing to use them. In the Presbyterian Church in America, the Book of Church Order covers all essential procedures. Be sure officers are familiar with the steps outlined there, and that they study them thoroughly before beginning a disciplinary matter.

- d. In handling a disciplinary case, stress accuracy. Basing actions on assumptions and impressions will lead to trouble.
- e. If legal action is threatened by the member charged, consult a Christian attorney to review the procedures the church is following before proceeding.
- f. Limit the “audience” to the “community of interest”. Unnecessary publication of the disciplinary matter is unethical and can lead to lawsuits. The Book of Church Order gives church courts discretion as to public announcements of church discipline. If the court decides to announce the discipline to the membership, the following are recommended guidelines:
 - (1) Hold a closed congregational meeting. Ask all visitors to leave
 - (2) Read a brief statement from the Session which has been written ahead of time and deals with the case only generally, not in specific detail. Do not mention other individuals, who, while perhaps involved in the matter, were not members of the church subject to discipline.
 - (3) Discreetly record the meeting so there is a record of what was said. Also, keep a copy of the written statement that was read.
 - (4) After reading a brief statement which focuses on Biblical reason for the discipline, lead the congregation in prayer for the individuals(s) involved and the church as a whole. Be sure that the scope of information disclosed is limited. It is not necessary to identify the specific sin involved --a reference to “unrepentant sin” might suffice.
- g. Make certain there are not written announcements regarding the disciplinary matter. Never mention church discipline in a church newsletter or bulletin. Even a letter sent out to church members could potentially get into the hands of a non-member and could lead to a charge of “invasion of privacy” or one of the other claims being used by those suing their church.
- h. Maintain an attitude of planning your procedures in advance rather than just reacting to problems that develop. In the care of Christ’s Church, there will inevitably be difficulties, but He will honor efforts to maintain the purity of His Bride.
- i. More than anything else, do church discipline “by the Book”. Follow Scripture and the Book of Church Order meticulously. Many problems in discipline cases can be traced to church officers getting creative and ignoring established procedures.

*Note: Law firm is now Hollberg & Weaver, 2921 Piedmont Road NE, Suite C, Atlanta, GA 30305, Phone number 404-760-1116

BIBLICAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION (BCO Appendix I)

Preface

As we continue to seek to become a church holy before God, the manner in which we respond to sin and conflicts in the body, and gently shepherd those caught in sin, will reflect our commitment to the authority of God's Word and the spirit of love, which should define all of our actions and relationships. Biblical peacemaking is one of God's highest priorities (Matt. 5:23-24; Rom. 12:18; Gal. 6:1); therefore, it must be one of our highest priorities. The *Book of Church Order (BCO)* reflects our commitment to following God's procedure for reclaiming those going astray. It says, "Scriptural law is the basis of all discipline because it is the revelation of God's Holy will. Proper disciplinary principles are set forth in the Scriptures and must be followed" (BCO 27-5). It also says, "An injured party shall not become a prosecutor of personal offenses without having tried the means of reconciliation and of reclaiming the offender, required by Christ" (BCO 31-5). The purpose of this Appendix [of the BCO] is to provide guidance through the steps of biblical peacemaking required as pre-conditions to judicial process in cases of personal offense (BCO 31-5), and for use whenever possible in cases of general offense (BCO 31-7).

Each presbytery should endeavor to have several elders trained in the methods of "Christian conciliation" (including mediation and arbitration), and available to serve as Christian conciliators in cases that could and should be resolved privately before judicial process is initiated. We would do well to follow the wisdom of those who have considered the importance of this matter. For example, Elder Edmond Clowney states, "Discipline...is not first an exercise of negative judgment, a matter of church courts and censures. It begins with the care of friends with whom we strive to follow Christ" (Clowney, E.P., *The Church*, IVP, 1995).

The Biblical Steps of Discipline as they Relate to Biblical Peacemaking

BCO 27-5 outlines the proper principles for the exercise of church discipline. This BCO section emphasizes that the steps indicated, (a) through (d), must be followed in proper order. The steps are:

- a) Instruction in the Word;
- b) An individual's responsibility to admonish one another (Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1);
- c) If the admonition is rejected, then the calling of one or more witnesses (Matt. 18:16);
- d) If rejection persists, then the church must act through her court unto admonition, suspension, excommunication and deposition.

This Appendix [of the BCO] addresses the first three steps, (a) through (c), by providing an expanded discussion of the implications raised by Scriptural direction for a complete process at each step. Step (d), formal church discipline, is addressed by Part II of the *Book of Church Order*, The Rules of Discipline.

1. **The first step - Instruction in the Word.**

Many Christians do not fully understand the emphasis God places on living at peace and in unity with others (Eph. 4:3). Preaching and teaching should regularly address this emphasis and the purposes for church discipline as set forth in BCO 27-3 and BCO 27-4. Attention should be drawn to the fact that the main procedural passage related to church discipline, Matthew 18:15-20, is set forth in the context of two powerful parables teaching the extent and depth of God's love in reclaiming those who have strayed (Matt. 18:10-14), and the vast measure of His forgiveness and the expansive forgiveness He expects from His children toward one another (Matt. 18:21-35). The extent of instruction on reconciliation provided to church members in "new member classes" and regular preaching from the pulpit will have a significant bearing on the extent to which a church member understands the benefits of church discipline and has consented to ecclesiastical jurisdiction (which is helpful for the church if it is to avoid legal liability for the proper exercise of church discipline).

Teaching God's Word concerning sin, and conflicts that result from it, and how Christians should respond biblically to conflict, will equip church members to become peacemakers themselves. Peacemaking has always been one of a Christian's most important ministries. As we are reminded in 2 Corinthians 5:18, God "reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." One of the most powerful ways that we can encourage reconciliation with God is to model reconciliation among people. When others see us resolve our differences in a loving and biblical manner, they are inclined to give more weight to what we say about the Lord (John 13:34-35; 17:20-23). On the other hand, when they see Christians embroiled in disputes, they tend to write God's people off as hypocrites and dismiss the claims of Christ (Rom. 2:21-24; 1 Cor. 6:1-8).

The Bible sets forth a process for resolving personal and substantive disputes in a constructive manner. This process is sometimes referred to as "Christian conciliation" and it may be used to resolve everything from minor personal differences to church divisions or lawsuits involving church members. As indicated in passages such as Proverbs 19:11, Matthew 5:23-25 and 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, and Galatians 6:1, conciliation involves three basic steps: (1) when Christians are involved in a conflict that is too serious to overlook, the first thing that they should do is **meet together privately and in person** to try to resolve their differences; (2) if this effort is unsuccessful, they should ask one or more other Christians to meet with them and help them to seek reconciliation and a voluntary settlement of their differences (a process sometimes referred to as **mediation**); and (3) if they cannot arrive at a voluntary settlement, they should ask one or more other Christians to hear both sides of the matter and render a biblically based decision that both sides are obligated to accept (a process sometimes referred to as **arbitration**).

There are many benefits to resolving disputes through Christian conciliation. It prevents a public quarrel that would dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ and diminish the credibility and witness of His church. Conciliation also allows Christians to demonstrate their faith in Christ and their confidence in His teachings (John 13:34; 14:15; 17:20-23). In addition, conciliation encourages forgiveness and promotes reconciliation, which can help to preserve valuable relationships and strengthen the church (Eph. 4:29-32; Col. 3:12-17). Conciliation also helps people to identify and deal with the root causes of conflict, which may include such things as pride, selfishness, fear, vengeance, greed, bitterness, or unforgiveness (see Matt. 7:3-5). This allows people to make changes in their lives so that they will enjoy more peaceful relationships in the future (Eph. 4:1-3, 22-24).

Christian conciliation is especially beneficial for people who sincerely want to do what is right and are open to learning where they have been wrong (Prov. 15:31-32). Conciliators can help them to identify improper attitudes or unwise practices, to understand more fully the effects of their decision and actions, and to make improvements in their lives that will help them to honor and serve the Lord more effectively in the future (1 Peter 2:12).

Teaching and Ruling elders are encouraged to learn all they can about Christian conciliation and develop local ministries that will equip members under their care to respond to conflicts in a manner that reflects the power of Christ working in their lives. The more church members understand these concepts and benefits, the more likely they will be to apply biblical principles when conflicts occur.

2. The second step - An individual's responsibility to admonish another (Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1). Scripture warns against making a premature judgment about a matter (Matt. 7:1-5). By first going personally and in private to those who have offended, we provide the opportunity for clarification of misunderstandings and avoid premature judgment. This step includes the three responses of personal peacemaking as follows:

Overlook an offense: An individual may overlook an offense of another if it is minor in nature and it has not significantly dishonored God, damaged a personal relationship, or hurt other people

(including the offender). “A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense” (Prov. 19:11).

Discussion: When personal wrongs are too serious to overlook, the parties are required to seek to resolve them privately through loving confrontation and confession. “If your brother has something against you...go and be reconciled” (Matt. 5:23-24). “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you” (Matt. 18:15).

Negotiation: When a substantive issue related to money, property, or other material issues or rights divides Christians, a process of biblical negotiation should be followed that will meet the interests of all those involved. “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Phil. 2:4).

Privately responding to conflict early, before it escalates, through the means of these three forms of personal peacemaking will often result in reconciliation and no need for further peacemaking attention. Successful personal peacemaking is usually based on at least one parties’ willingness to accept responsibility for how they have contributed to the conflict and by being willing to humble themselves for the greater goal of God’s glory through “making every effort” (Eph. 4:3) to keep the unity of the spirit.

3. The third step - If private admonition is rejected, then calling of one or more witnesses (Matt. 18:16; 1 Cor. 6:1-9). Involving others is a serious escalation of a conflict and should be considered only after the elements of step two have been fully exhausted. Step three includes the three assisted peacemaking responses as follows:

Mediation: If a dispute cannot be resolved through personal peacemaking, the parties should ask one or more other Christians to meet with them to help the parties communicate more effectively and explore possible solutions. The mediators may give advice but have no power to impose solutions. They may later act as witnesses in formal church disciplinary proceedings, should mediation fail due to hardness of heart or the unrepentant sin of one or both parties. “If he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” (Matt. 18:16).

Arbitration: When two parties to a conflict cannot come to a voluntary agreement on a substantive issue, one or more arbitrators may be appointed to listen to the arguments and evidence of each side and render a binding decision. “If you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church” (1 Cor. 6:1-8).

Church Discipline: Formal church discipline, pursuant to the procedures of BCO Part II, is reserved for those cases where the person who professes to be a Christian refuses to be reconciled, repent of personal sin, and do what is right. Church leaders bearing ecclesiastical jurisdiction over such persons should formally intervene to promote justice, repentance, and forgiveness. “If he refuses to listen, tell it to the church” (Matt. 18:17-20).

Application of the Principles

Judicial cases that come to the attention of church courts frequently begin as personal disputes between two or more individuals. Typically, when one side feels they are not getting what they want, they bring charges of sin against the other side. In this manner, sessions and presbyteries are drawn into conflicts that would better be resolved at a personal level through Christian conciliation. Of course, when conflicted parties refuse to be reconciled, the accountability afforded by formal church discipline should be used to further the goals of purity in the church, the rebuke of offenses, the removal of scandal, and the spiritual good of offenders (1 Cor. 5:5). Every effort should be made, however, to resolve the conflict through repentance, confession, forgiveness and reconciliation before formal charges are entertained by a church court. The intent of the relevant BCO provisions is to

encourage Christian unity before the formal provisions of church discipline are brought to bear on a situation. Of course, not every situation will lend itself to Christian conciliation. However, every effort should be made to utilize private confrontation, mediation, and arbitration in order to reserve the use of formal church discipline, and the time of church courts, for those matters related to the purity of the church and the keeping and reclaiming of disobedient sinners (*BCO* 27-3). Many of these ends will be realized through the processes of Christian conciliation and, therefore, should be viewed as prerequisite procedures to the formal disciplinary process.

Failure to Follow the Steps

Churches unwilling or unable to instruct their members completely in the full breadth of the steps of conciliation and discipline encourage resorting to unbiblical, worldly responses to conflict. The escape responses of denial, flight, and even suicide can be expected if church members are not positively directed to the biblical processes of Christian conciliation. Others, when not given the hope of having matters responded to within the body of Christ, will resort to civil litigation, verbal and physical attack, and possibly even murder to remove an opponent where there is no avenue for a just resolution.

Moving a case too quickly to formal church discipline can build barriers that could otherwise be dealt with in mediation or arbitration. Every church and presbytery is encouraged to equip elders and mature members with the skills of Christian conciliation, and to exhaust conciliation processes and remedies before moving to formal church discipline.

Use of Conciliation Clauses in Membership Documents

One significant way church members can be educated and prepared for biblical conflict resolution is through the use of a conciliation clause in the membership covenant or other agreement signed by new members when they join the church. The recommended language for this clause is set forth below. It should be noted that signing this clause cannot be made a condition for membership, but may be encouraged as a voluntary biblical commitment. It should be clearly offered as an optional statement for the resolution of any disputes that may arise.

Christian Conciliation

Members are encouraged but not required to make this additional commitment.

If I ever have a dispute with the church that cannot be resolved through its own internal procedures, I agree to resolve the dispute according to biblical principles (such as those set forth in Matthew 5:23-25 and 18:15-20, and 1 Corinthians 6:1-8) by submitting the matter to mediation and, if necessary, arbitration, according to the Bylaws of this church and the *Rules of Procedure* of the Institute for Christian Conciliation. I understand that arbitration is a legally binding process, and that judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction.

Dated this ____ day of _____, 20____

Name (Printed) Signature

Name (Printed) Signature

Parent's or Guardian's Name Parent's or Guardian's Signature
(for minors)

THIS AGREEMENT IS SUBJECT TO ARBITRATION PURSUANT TO THE
[STATE] ARBITRATION ACT, TITLE ##, CHAPTER #, [STATE] CODE
ANNOTATED.

Amend Church Bylaws to Allow Continuing Church Jurisdiction

The following clause is recommended for inclusion in local church bylaws to allow the continuing ecclesiastical jurisdiction over a member who may otherwise simply flee from the church to avoid biblical discipline:

Members may be removed from membership at their own request following the steps of appropriate pastoral care as set forth in *BCO* 38-4. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with the church, the Session shall attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the church and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal spiritual growth. If the Session is unable to resolve those matters, it shall offer to assist the member in locating a church of like faith and practice that can respond more effectively to his gifts and needs. If it appears to the Session that a member has requested removal merely to avoid church discipline, that request shall not be given effect until the disciplinary process has been properly concluded.

Use of this clause will also help the church avoid serious legal liability for following through with all of the steps of church discipline. Members should be informed of its provisions and carefully taught the Scriptural basis for continuing shepherding and pastoral care especially when caught in sin (see also *BCO* 38-3 and 38-4).

Conclusion

The courts of the church are encouraged to employ the means of Christian conciliation whenever possible. That is, churches and presbyteries are encouraged to defer judicial action until all other remedies have been exhausted. Peace, unity, and the mission of the Church can be furthered through careful and complete attention to every step of the process as set forth in *BCO* 27-5 as understood through the expanded guidance concerning Christian conciliation as set forth above.

LIABILITY IN HIRING

In a court case adjudicated by a State Court of Appeals, the Court concluded that claims in question could be resolved by application of neutral principles of civil law and, therefore, that the trial court does have subject-matter jurisdiction in an ecclesiastical matter.

In the case under consideration, the plaintiff was allegedly defrauded and seduced by her pastor and appealed the trial court's dismissal of the complaint against the General Board of the Church, (i.e. General Assembly, GA), and the District Church (i.e. Regional Presbytery). The trial court concluded that it lacked subject-matter jurisdiction because the case against the Board and the District would involve inquiry into the ecclesiastical doctrine, law, and polity of the Church, in violation of the doctrine of ecclesiastical abstention. It was concluded that the claims in question could be resolved by application of neutral principles of civil law and, therefore, that the trial court does have subject-matter jurisdiction.

The plaintiff's amended complaint alleged that the Board and District were guilty of negligent hiring, negligent supervision, negligent retention, and negligence under a theory of respondent superior, intentional infliction of emotional distress, securities fraud, constructive fraud, and racketeering. Named defendants also included the local church, a church employee, the senior pastor, the executive pastor, and several companies on whose behalf the pastor, and the pastor's brother allegedly solicited investment funds to the plaintiff. The Board (GA) and the District (Regional Presbytery) were the only defendants involved in this appeal.

According to the complaint, at or about the time these defendants hired the staff member (pastor), they had credible information that he had a history of stealing money from, improperly soliciting investments from, and engaging in sexual misconduct with church members in other states. The complaint also alleged that, when the Church was informed that the pastor and the staff member were soliciting money from church members, the Church vouched for the pastor and conducted no investigation despite having knowledge of his reputation and history.

The complaint also alleged that the pastor engaged in sexual relations with the plaintiff by using his position as pastor and spiritual advisor to exert emotional and physical control over her in an attempt to defraud her of money.

In their answer, the Board and District denied that the court had subject-matter jurisdiction, denied having control over the business affairs of the Church, and denied hiring the pastor. The Board (GA) and the District (Regional Presbytery) filed separate Motions to Dismiss.

The Board's motion argued that the doctrine of ecclesiastical abstention required dismissal of the lawsuit against the Board under the State's Rules of Civil Procedure. Citing the "Manual of the Church" (i.e. BCO), and attaching several pages of the Manual to its motion, the Board explained that the church is a hierarchical church composed of three independent authorities: the local churches, the district assemblies, and the General Assembly, over which preside the Board. The Board contended that the authority of the General Assembly, and therefore of the Board, was limited to making rules and regulations for departments related to the church, organizing the membership of the church into district assemblies, determining the qualifications of district assembly representatives and the boundaries of assembly districts, and defining the powers of the district assemblies. The Board maintained that it had no control over and no knowledge of the

operations of local churches. The Board argued that, under the ecclesiastical abstention doctrine, civil courts must accept the provisions of the “Manual” and are precluded from inquiring further.

The District’s motion to dismiss argued that the court lacked subject-matter jurisdiction under the First Amendment and the doctrine of ecclesiastical abstention. Also citing the “Manual”, the District stated that the church was an independent entity that had the right to select and hire its own pastor, manage its own financial affairs, and control its own local work. According to the District, local churches report their activities to the District annually, but the District does not hire or discharge local pastors or staff members or set their duties. The District alleged that its only contact with the pastor was in granting him the status of licensed minister for the church, which authorized him to preach the Word, to administer sacraments, and to officiate at marriages.

The District (Presbytery) asserted that it approved or disapproved of a local church’s selection of pastor based on an ecclesiastical review. The senior pastor was required to report annually to the District; other on the staff of the local church reported to the senior pastor. The District would review the status of licensed ministers annually for renewal of the license. Otherwise, the District exercised oversight with respect to its ministers only upon complaint by a church member.

The District argued that, because its role was limited to licensing the pastor, any inquiry into the District’s involvement in the case would necessarily require a review of the ecclesiastical doctrine of the church regarding licensing ministers, a matter over which, it asserted, the courts have no jurisdiction.

The plaintiff responded that the complaint did not involve ecclesiastical issues; it involved a determination whether the Board and the District breached a secular duty by hiring and licensing the pastor despite knowledge of his prior victimization of parishioners. The plaintiff also argued that the “Manual” was outside the pleadings and requested a continuance to conduct further discovery if the court considered the “Manual” in reaching its decision. The plaintiff argued that attempts to depose the Board and the District had been unsuccessful and that the plaintiff expected that the depositions would demonstrate that both the Board and the District had in fact been involved in hiring the pastor.

The court ruled that the “Manual” set out the duties of the Church, the District, and the Board, and that any review of the District’s and the Board’s role in the case “would necessarily require a review of the ecclesiastical doctrine, law and polity of the Church (denomination) as it relates to granting licenses to ministers”. The court concluded that the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, and the doctrine of ecclesiastical abstention precluded such an inquiry. The court granted the Board’s and the District’s motions to dismiss, and it denied the plaintiff’s motion, finding that the requested discovery would not “defeat the basis of the Court’s granting dismissal”.

The Appeals court further said, civil courts must accept “the decisions of the highest judicatories of a religious organization of hierarchical polity on matters of discipline, faith, internal organization, or ecclesiastical rule, custom, or law”. However, when a church-related dispute can be resolved by applying neutral principles of law without inquiry into religious doctrine and without resolving a religious controversy, the civil courts may adjudicate the dispute.

Because religious organizations are part of the civil community, they are subject to societal rules governing property rights, torts, and criminal conduct. The First Amendment does not excuse individuals or religious groups from complying with valid neutral laws.

The question in this present case is whether the civil court can adjudicate claims against certain officials of a religious organization based on their alleged licensing and hiring of a pastor whom they knew, or had reason to know, was likely to victimize members of that organization. Courts addressing this kind of issue have reached various conclusions.

In the present case, the plaintiff claims injury by the tortuous conduct of individuals whom church officials placed in a position to injure her when they knew, or should have known, of the risk of harm presented by those individuals. In our opinion, the Appeals' court resolution of these claims does not require the interpretation of religious doctrine or ecclesiastical law; it requires application of tort law principles that are neutral and generally applicable.

The Board contends that, even if neutral principles of tort law applied, the court would still have to examine the structure of the Church (Denomination) to properly define the duties of the various defendants. Maybe so, but the court can examine the structure of a religious organization for such a purpose. A court may examine religious documents so long as it is done in purely secular terms. Any inquiry into the structure of the religious organization would not be undertaken to resolve any internal organizational dispute or the appropriateness of the conduct of the parties in relation to their religious beliefs or obligations. Inquiry into the organizational structure would be to factually determine the roles the parties played in the licensing and hiring of an employee.

The District (Presbytery) argues that the plaintiff seeks to have it assert control over local churches and pastors in contradiction to the polity of the Church (denomination), which precludes interference with the local church by the District. Plaintiff's claims are not that broad. Also note that the "Manual" provides for the possibility of a district superintendent disapproving a proposed pastor to a local church. Consequently, the application of neutral tort principles in this case does not conflict with the polity of the Church.

The parties here have not specifically addressed individual claims at this stage of the litigation. Because the Board and District presented a general challenge to the court's jurisdiction to consider the case, we have addressed the matter generally.

Because of our resolution of the jurisdiction issue, we do not decide whether the trial court abused its discretion when denying the plaintiff's motion, or when including (Rule) language in its dismissal order.

It is concluded that the trial court erred in concluding that it lacked subject-matter jurisdiction to adjudicate any of the plaintiff's claims against the Board and the District. The judgment of dismissal is therefore reversed, and the matter is remanded to the trial court for further proceedings.

Synopsis by PCA Stated Clerk's Office, 12/4/02

Court of Appeals, State of Arizona, Rashedi v. General Bd of Church of the Nazarene, 9-19-02



STATISTICAL FORM & COMPENSATION STUDY

In January a packet of forms and instructions for collecting statistical information about the PCA is mailed to churches. On average, approximately 1/2 of PCA churches complete these forms and return them. Presbytery Clerks are asked to encourage churches in the presbytery to complete and return these forms.

If desired, the information may be accessed and input via online Stat Forms at www.pcaac.org/stats. The online system for stats is password protected because the information specific to a church is accessible. The ORG ID # and Password needed to access the system is printed on the hard copy which is mailed out to the churches.

The information gathered is compiled, analyzed and published in the Yearbook of the Presbyterian Church in America, and is also downloadable on the pcaac.org website. The Yearbook is sold through the PCA Bookstore.

For a sample of the "Stat Packet" please email ederr@pcanet.org. Churches or persons having questions about the forms, instructions, passwords or process involved may contact Mrs. Erika Derr in the Stated Clerk's Office, ederr@pcanet.org.



SESSION RECORDS

The Stated Clerk's Office offers a Handbook for Session Clerks for download on our website here: <http://www.pcaac.org/presbyterydownloads/>

Nothing in the BCO addresses the duties of the Clerk of the Session other than BCO 12 (specifically 12-6, 7, 8). Robert's Rules of Order, 10th Edition, page 531, "The secretary [clerk] is elected viva voce in the same manner as the chairman. When the secretary has been elected, he should take his seat near the chairman and keep a record of the proceedings."

I. DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY/CLERK [from RRO, 10th Edition, page 442-3]

1. To keep a record of all the proceedings of the organization--usually called the minutes.
2. To keep on file all committee reports.
3. To keep the organization's official membership roll (unless another officer or staff member has this duty); and to call the roll where it is required.
4. To make the minutes and records available to members upon request (see below)
5. To notify officers, committee members, and delegates of their election or appointment, to furnish committees with whatever documents are required for the performance of their duties, and to have on hand at each meeting a list of all existing committees and their members.
6. To furnish delegates with credentials.
7. To sign all certified copies of acts of the society, unless otherwise specified in the bylaws.
8. To maintain record book(s) in which the bylaws, special rules of order, standing rules, and minutes are entered, with any amendments to these documents properly recorded, and to have the current record book(s) on hand at every meeting. [Sessional Minute Books can be obtained from the PCA Bookstore, 1-800-283-1357, www.pcabookstore.com. They contain acid free paper for archive purposes.]
9. To send out to the membership a notice of each meeting, known as the call of the meeting, and to conduct the general correspondence of the organization--that is, correspondence that is not a function proper to other offices or to committees.
10. To prepare, prior to each meeting, an order of business for the use of the presiding officer, showing in their exact order, under the correct headings, all matters known in advance that are due to come up and--if applicable--the times for which they are set.
11. In the absence of the president and vice-president, to call the meeting to order and preside until the immediate election of a chairman pro tem.

II. GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING AND EXAMINING SESSION MINUTES

"Minutes" are a permanent record in an orderly form.

PERMANENT

- All minutes should be typed or legibly written in ink.
- All minutes should be kept in a bound volume for permanent record with the name of the Church appearing on the cover of the volume. Loose-leaf notebook is acceptable.

RECORD

- Include the date of celebration of the Lord's Supper, record of baptisms, the manner of reception and dismissal of members. If a member is dropped from the rolls, the Clerk must state the reason and refer to the appropriate article in the BCO (BCO 12-5).

- A copy of the annual budget approved by the Session and the annual statistical report should be attached annually (BCO 12-5).
- Joint meetings of the Session and Diaconate should be recorded, keeping in mind that no joint actions can be taken (BCO 9-4) and that notations should be made when the Session approves the minutes of the Diaconate (BCO 9-4; 12-5).
- The minutes should include the names of delegates to Presbytery or General Assembly as well as the report they make to the Session after Presbytery or General Assembly (BCO 12-5).

ORDERLY

- Every Session must meet at least once quarterly (BCO 12-6) and submit their minutes annually for Presbytery's review (BCO 12-7).
- Follow Parliamentary procedure in accordance with The Book of Church Order and Robert's Rules of Order as approved by the General Assembly.
- Each action should be put in the form of a motion, with a second and notation of whether the motion passed or failed. The Clerk should not write his personal opinion in the minutes, but notes may be made for historical purposes.
- The minutes of each meeting should be approved at that meeting or at the following meeting. This should be done by way of a motion.
- The Clerk must sign each set of Session minutes. Congregational meetings' minutes must be included and signed by the Moderator and the elected Clerk.

FORM

- Opening - At every meeting the Clerk should record the date, time, and place of the meeting, the names of those present, absent, and excused. The names of visitors should be recorded. The Clerk should note whether a given meeting is Stated or Called.
- Pages should be consecutively numbered, leaving no blank pages between meetings and no records left unattached.
- The minutes are to show that the meeting was opened and closed with prayer (BCO 12-9).
- Presbytery's Committee to Examine Session Minutes shall report its findings using the terminology employed by the General Assembly in its Rules for Assembly Operations (RAO), Article 16 (exceptions of form and exceptions of substance), and Sessions shall respond to exceptions of substance Presbytery finds by the same procedure specified in the RAO.



REVIEWERS REPORT FORM FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF SESSIONAL RECORDS

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer either “yes” or “no” in the first blank and record page numbers where applicable in the second blank. Make two (2) copies. The original is inserted in the Session Minutes Book, and the copy is kept by the Committee on Court Duties.

NAME OF CHURCH _____

Reviewed pages _____ through _____. Reviewed Period (dates) _____ through _____.

	Y/N	PAGE # (S)
1. Church name appears on the outside of the front cover.	_____	_____
2. “Guidelines for Keeping Session Minutes” posted inside front cover.	_____	_____
3. A. The pages are numbered.	_____	_____
B. Each page contains information (no blanks).	_____	_____
4. A. The date of each meeting is recorded.	_____	_____
B. The place of each meeting is recorded.	_____	_____
C. The type (stated or called) of each meeting is recorded.	_____	_____
5. A. Record of quorum present at each meeting (BCO 12-1,7)	_____	_____
B. There is a record of the names of those present or absent.	_____	_____
C. There is a record of invitation to seat non-members.	_____	_____
6. A. When the pastor (moderator) was absent, there is a record of appointment of a moderator. (BCO 12-2, 3)	_____	_____
B. When the clerk of session was absent, record election of acting clerk.	_____	_____
7. A. Each meeting was opened with prayer. (BCO 12-9)	_____	_____
B. Each meeting was closed with prayer. (BCO 12-9)	_____	_____
8. A. When new members are enrolled, there is a record of how received (profession of faith, transfer of letter, or re-affirmation of faith).	_____	_____
B. When new members are enrolled by transfer of letter, there is a record of the name and location of the church from which they came.	_____	_____
C. When members are dismissed, there is a record of the name and location of the church to which they were transferred.	_____	_____
9. A. Record of election of ruling elder commissioner(s) to Stated Presbytery meetings. (January, April, July, October)	_____	_____
B. Record of reports to Session by commissioners to Presbytery. (January, April, July, October)	_____	_____
10. A. Record of election of commissioner(s) to General Assembly. (June)	_____	_____
B. Record of report to session by commissioner to General Assembly.	_____	_____
11. Record of an annual (quarterly or monthly) examination of the minutes of the Board of Deacons. (BCO 9-4)	_____	_____
12. Record of Session approval of annual statistical report.	_____	_____
13. Record of stated times the Lord’s Supper was observed during the year. (BCO 58-1)	_____	_____

14. A. Record of the Call and Purpose of each congregational meeting. _____
- B. Record of names of officers elected, their examination _____
and/or date to be installed.
15. Minutes of any ordination and/or installation services as Called meetings of _____
the Session in the presence of the congregation for the officers elected by
the congregation.
16. A. Signature of moderator at the end of minutes. _____
- B. Signature of the clerk of session at the end of minutes. _____
17. Session held at least four stated meetings during the year (BCO 12-6) _____
18. In a judicial case before the Session, there is a record of full _____
proceedings as required in the rules of discipline. (BCO, Part II)
19. Note of its annual review and accuracy, of its record of "baptism of _____
communing members, of non-communing members, and of deaths
and dismissal of church members." (BCO 12-8)
20. Minutes of previous meetings were read and approved by Session. _____
21. OTHER COMMENTS: _____

Signed by Reviewer: _____

Date Reviewed: _____



SAMPLE STANDING RULES FOR SESSIONAL AND MISSION CHURCH RECORDS

CHAPTER 14 - SESSIONAL RECORDS AND MISSION CHURCH RECORDS

- 14.1 The Stated Clerk shall annually notify each organized church to submit records for review according to the system of rotation adopted by the Presbytery.
- 14.2 The Clerk of Session shall keep a permanent consecutive record apart from the minutes of:
 1. Members: when and how enrolled, when and how dropped from the roll
 2. Baptisms: infant and adult
 3. Deaths of members
- 14.3 The Session shall meet at least once each quarter (BCO 12-6).
- 14.4 Mission churches shall present records to presbytery at least every six months for review. Mission churches shall keep a roll of all communicant and non-communicant members. Each Mission church shall keep basic statistics on members, baptisms, weddings and funerals and brief minutes of meetings showing significant motions. The Mission church shall present a quarterly report to Presbytery's MNA Committee. Copies of the PCA Annual Statistical Report shall also be included at the end of each year to verify membership totals and financial records.
- 14.5 Guidelines for keeping church minutes:

Minutes shall be kept by the Clerk of Session, must be typed or legibly handwritten in ink, on pages numbered consecutively. Erasures, inserts and footnotes shall be avoided as much as possible. Since the record must last for many years, minutes shall be kept in a bound or lock-type book, not a loose-leaf binder, because pages can get lost.

 1. To conform to BCO requirements and Presbytery rules, minutes shall specify kind of meeting (stated or called). Also show name of church, date, time and place of meeting and who opened and closed the meeting with prayer.
 2. List names of moderator, elders present and absent, plus any visitors. Care should be taken that a quorum is present. If Clerk of Session was absent, show name of Clerk Pro-Tem.
 3. Show that minutes were approved, not later than the next stated meeting, and date approved. Robert's Rules suggest this format: MINUTES APPROVED, DATE_____, Clerk's initials _____.
 4. Show actions, motions adopted, business transacted. Names of mover may be recorded but seconder of motions should not be shown. Lost motions need not be recorded.

5. Clerk shall sign minutes. Moderator need not sign unless minutes are for a trial.
6. Names of commissioners to Presbytery and General Assembly shall be shown, with their brief report after attending.
7. Clerk shall keep an accurate record of baptisms, communicant members received and dismissed, deaths, removals, names of members transferred in or out. The minister shall keep a record of names of people he marries.
9. Minutes shall be approved before review by Presbytery.
10. At end of each year, a copy of the Statistical Report to General Assembly shall be inserted, plus a summary of actions taken at congregational meetings, unless minutes include congregational meetings.

14.6 Guidelines for examination of sessional records:

Church Name and City _____
 Date of Review _____ Reviewer's Name _____

Reviewer shall fill out two copies of form provided by Clerk of Presbytery: One for Clerk of Presbytery, and the other to be inserted in Session's book (BCO 40-3). On last page of minutes reviewed, Presbytery should mark the book with date of review and whether it approves or disapproves the records with Notations or Exceptions. List any comments on the report below:

1. The following should be present: date, time, place of meeting, and kind of meeting: stated or called.
2. Session should meet at least quarterly (BCO 12-6).
3. The names of members present, and members absent with and without excuse and visitors should be recorded. Minutes should show a quorum is present, either by the list of attendees or by a statement (BCO 12-1).
4. The meeting should be opened and closed with prayer (BCO 10-5, 12-9).
5.
 - a. The Minutes should include approval of records of past proceedings.
 - b. The Minutes should include a record of communication and supporting documents deemed necessary by the session.
 - c. The Minutes should include all committee reports and supporting documents deemed necessary by the session.
6. Minutes should show actions, motions adopted, business transacted.
7. The Minutes should include the names of members received and dismissed, together with the names of baptized children of parents received or dismissed. The Minutes

should record baptisms, Lord's Supper, marriages and deaths in the congregation. The church should keep a consecutive roll of all communicant members and their baptized children including dates members were received, and whether by profession, reaffirmation of faith, or transfer.

8. The Minutes should include the election of representatives to Presbytery and General Assembly and whether attended and reported afterwards.
9. Session examines, ordains, and installs ruling elders and deacons (BCO 12-5).
10. The Minutes should include the calling of congregational meetings.
11. The Minutes should include annual statistical reports to Presbytery.
12. The Session should maintain a separate compilation of minutes and records of congregational meetings or if incorporated in the regular record, should be plainly so labeled.
13. Deacons should regularly submit minutes and financial records to Session (BCO 9-4).
14. The Session approves and adopts the church budget (BCO 12-5).
15. Minutes should include the signature of the clerk and moderator of the meeting.
16. The Minutes shall be kept in compliance to all related rules in the Book of Church Order, including submitting of minutes for review once a year (BCO 12-7).
17. The Minutes shall be kept in a bound or lock-type book with numbered pages; not a loose leaf binder, because pages can get lost.
18. This checklist shall be maintained with the sessional minutes as a guide for the clerk of session.

PRESBYTERY OFFICER REMUNERATION

72% of the clerks reported salary data in 2025.

Clerks

Responses:	63 (of 87)
Not paid:	4
High:	\$18,775
Low:	\$1,000 (excludes those not paid)
Average:	\$6,203
Mean:	\$6,000

Treasurers

Paid:	19
Average:	\$2,466
Mean:	\$2,000

Assistant/Recording Clerk

Paid:	18
Average:	\$2,018
Mean:	\$1,350

PCA's 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Group and EIN Information

The PCA Administrative Committee maintains a Group 501(c)(3) tax exempt group that is free for PCA churches and presbyteries to join. The Stated Clerk's office receives many questions about the 501(c)(3) group and federal tax employer identification numbers (EIN). Below is information about the tax exempt group, benefits of joining the group, and obtaining an EIN.

The 11th General Assembly in 1983 instructed the Administrative Committee to file the necessary information with the IRS to obtain group recognition of PCA churches and presbyteries.

Churches are exempt from federal income tax under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to churches are deductible under Section 170, and Section 508 specifically exempts churches and associations of churches from the requirement to apply for recognition of tax-exempt status. Nevertheless, there may be certain benefits from receiving official recognition of tax-exempt status from the IRS and obtaining a "501(c)(3) verification letter."

In dealing with the various agencies of civil government (local, state and federal), proof of tax-exempt status is often required. Even though churches are exempt from federal income tax by law, government agencies will sometimes require copies of organizational documents to prove exemption. Banks, donors, and other companies often require letters of verification that a church is included in a 501(c)(3) group exemption.

Participation in the PCA group listing with the IRS is optional. Either the session or the entire presbytery should decide whether or not it wants to be included. If the church or presbytery wishes to be included, all that is needed is to fill out an authorization form (enclosed) and email, fax, or mail it to the Administrative Committee. Churches and presbyteries are welcome to apply for their own recognition from the IRS, but for most churches and presbyteries, the PCA's group exemption saves them lots of time and paperwork with the IRS.

The IRS requires that each church and presbytery included on the list have a federal Employer Identification Number (EIN). The EIN is similar to an individual's Social Security Number and is used by the federal government to identify businesses, associations and churches, even if they have no employees. An EIN is used by a church or presbytery when reporting compensation paid to a minister or an employee, and is required by a banking institution when an account is opened. An EIN is not a "tax-exemption number". It will be used to identify the church or presbytery to the IRS and occasionally to other government agencies. If a church or presbytery is located in a state that exempts churches from state sales tax (not all states have such exemptions), there is a separate procedure for churches to obtain a tax exemption number and/or certificate. Check with your state tax department for further information.

The IRS has issued a "group exemption number" for the PCA churches and presbyteries included in the group exemption list, but that number is not used to obtain exemption from sales or other taxes. The number is only used on a few IRS forms, such as Form 990-T (if filing an annual tax return for unrelated business income) and Form 8274 (for electing exemption from FICA taxes on non-ordained employees).

All churches and presbyteries participating in the group IRS listing continue to use their own EIN whenever a federal identification number is requested (the number is sometimes called a

“Taxpayer Identification Number” [TIN]). The PCA’s Employer Identification Number is **never** to be used by a church or presbytery.

Three additional matters should be noted:

1. If your church or presbytery does not currently have an EIN, and you decide to participate in the group listing, you should file Form SS-4 with the IRS office for your region (not with the AC office). **This EIN Form SS-4 and the SS-4 Instructions can be found on the IRS website www.irs.gov. The IRS also has a quick online form you can fill out to obtain your EIN on their website.** After you obtain an EIN from the IRS, include it on the enclosed authorization form and send this form to the Administrative Committee office.
2. Even though you may not currently have any employees, the IRS may start sending you Form 941, “Employer’s Quarterly Federal Tax Return”. If you do not have employees subject to FICA taxes or the withholding of income taxes (ordained staff are not subject to either FICA or withholding), you should return the form to the IRS with a letter explaining that you do not have any employees subject to FICA or withholding. Mention that you obtained your EIN as part of the procedure for obtaining IRS recognition of tax-exempt status, and that you will begin filing Form 941 when, and if, you employ any staff subject to FICA and withholding taxes. Do not ignore the forms or any other communications sent by the IRS. If the IRS continues to send you Form 941 after you have made several attempts to resolve the matter, the local office of your Congressman may be able to get the matter straightened out with the IRS.
3. After completing the enclosed form authorizing the Administrative Committee to include your church or presbytery in the group listing with the IRS, send the form to our office by email, fax, or mail. Do not send the letter until you have an EIN. Our office will email you a copy of the IRS group exemption letter (the Determination Letter) along with a cover letter certifying that you are a part of the PCA’s group IRS listing. Updated verification and determination letters are available upon request at any time from the Administrative Committee.

In summary, the steps to participate in the PCA group listing with the IRS are:

1. The Session (or presbytery) should approve being listed.
2. The church (or presbytery) should obtain a federal Employer Identification Number (if it doesn’t already have one)
3. The church (or presbytery) should fill out the enclosed authorization form and email, fax, or mail to the Administrative Committee office.
4. The Administrative Committee will add your church (or presbytery) to the 501(c)(3) tax exemption group and will email you a 501(c)(3) verification letter along with the latest copy of the PCA’s Determination Letter.

An annual updated list is filed with the IRS each September, notifying them of additions, address changes and deletions of churches and presbyteries included in the PCA listing. Unless the Administrative Committee is notified in writing, each church and presbytery that has authorized our office to include it in the listing will continue to be listed. A church or presbytery may be deleted from the list, but our office must be notified in writing, and the deletion can only be done at the time of the annual update in September.

AUTHORIZATION FORM

The _____ (Presbytery, MNA, or Session) hereby authorizes the Presbyterian Church in America to include the church, mission, plant or presbytery named below in a group listing with the Internal Revenue Service for the purpose of recognition of federal tax-exempt status under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The following information is provided for the IRS group listing:

1.Name of Church, Mission, or Presbytery: _____

2.Please indicate if your Church is currently a Church Plant, Mission Church, or a Particularized Church: _____

3.Mailing Address: _____

4.Meeting Address: _____

Federal Employer Identification Number: _____

We will notify you of any change in our address or name change, so that you can keep the information on the IRS listing current. We understand that if we ever decide to have our name deleted from the IRS listing, we must notify you of our decision in writing.

We have/have not (strike the incorrect response) previously applied for recognition of federal tax exemption under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. If we previously applied for and received recognition of exempt status, our recognition letter was dated _____ and the issuing IRS office was located in _____.

Name—Please Print _____

Signature: _____

Title: _____
(i.e. Pastor, Church Planter, Clerk of Session, Clerk of Presbytery, Church Treasurer)

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date: _____

RETURN TO: stats@pcanet.org or fax: 678-825-1001

INCORPORATION OF PCA CHURCHES

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 church, not a cumbersome nuisance. Once a corporation has been formed, the church should see that annual reports are filed and that other corporate formalities are observed to preserve the benefits corporate status can provide to the church.

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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 local church is an optional procedure. The church'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 church 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 church is located. Most states provide for the formation of corporations by churches, although a few have unique laws applicable to churches or barring churches from having corporate status.

II. ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES OF INCORPORATION

There are both advantages and disadvantages from forming a corporation. "The legal advantages of incorporation include (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 The disadvantages noted by the Church/State Subcommittee are (1) expenses and formalities of corporations, and (2) governmental regulations for corporations and potential limitations on constitutional protections.

A. Advantages

- (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 church's. Without incorporation, every member and officer of the church potentially may be held personally liable for any claim on the church, including leases, loans, physical injuries incurred on church property or at a church-sponsored event, abuse, etc. Incorporation not only limits the personal liability of members and officers, it also often makes liability insurance easier and cheaper to secure.
- (2) *Litigation in the corporate name*: An incorporated church is ordinarily sued in its corporate name, whereas an unincorporated church must be sued in the names of all its members and officers.

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>.

- (3) *Convenience in holding property*: In some states, unincorporated entities must hold property in the names of all its members, creating complexities for property ownership.
- (4) *Availability of financing*: An incorporated church often may more readily borrow funds.
- (5) *Limitation of charitable trust regulation*: Charitable trust statutes typically do not apply to incorporated churches other than for specific trusts that they establish. Unincorporated churches are often subject to regulation as charitable trusts.
- (6) *Better protection of the organizational name*: Incorporation registers a unique corporate name with the State. This name is reserved in that state for the sole use of the incorporated entity. An unincorporated church can reserve its name, but the process is often more tedious.

B. Disadvantages

- (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, churches 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.²

III. INCORPORATION PROCEDURE

A. Decision to Incorporate

The decision to form a corporation should be considered initially by the Session. Though not required by *The Book of Church Order*, the Session should then make a recommendation to the congregation for its vote on the matter. In a mission church, the decision would be made by the temporary governing body (the presbytery commission or mother church Session).

B. Articles of Incorporation

The church should obtain competent legal counsel, since a "do it yourself" approach to incorporation might result in errors that could cause serious problems in the future. Exhibit A provides an example of Articles of Incorporation for a PCA congregation. A local attorney can modify the sample document to meet state requirements and local custom and assist in registering the corporation with the state.

² *M15GA*, 15-91, III.C.32 & 33, p. 191 and Appendix Q, p. 429 and online at <https://pcahistory.org/pca/digest/index.html>.

C. Organizational Meeting

Once the corporation has been formed by filing the Articles of Incorporation with the appropriate state authority and receiving a Certificate of Incorporation (name may vary by state), the corporation should hold an organizational meeting. Since *BCO* 25-7 states that "all the communing members on the roll of that church shall be members of the corporation," the organizational meeting should be held at a properly called congregational meeting. Exhibit B is an example of the Minutes for an organizational meeting. The matters included in the meeting may need to be tailored to the legal requirements of the state in which the church is located.³

In a mission church, the organizational meeting would consist of the trustees instead of members. The trustees would ordinarily be the organizing pastor and his temporary governing body. Some states allow unanimous action in lieu of a corporation meeting. Exhibit D provides an example of minutes of an organizational meeting for the trustees by common consent in lieu of an actual meeting. If state law does not permit such a shortcut to holding an organizational meeting, or should it be necessary to hold a meeting to discuss other corporate matters, the sample minutes can be easily adapted to an actual meeting.

D. Bylaws

One of the most important matters at the organizational meeting is the adoption of the corporate Bylaws. Exhibit C provides sample Bylaws which seek to harmonize legal requirements with Scriptural mandates and the provisions of *The Book of Church Order*. Although the Bylaws can be amended and expanded as needed, caution should be taken not to make them too lengthy or detailed. The Bylaws should apply only to the legal necessities of the corporation. Ecclesiastical matters and other policy decisions are to be left to *The Book of Church Order* and action by the Session.

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 active Session members serve as the Board of Trustees (or Board of Directors) to eliminate the potential misunderstandings about legal authority that can develop when there are two separate groups. The congregation should be informed that in electing a man to serve as a Ruling Elder, they are also electing him to serve on the Board of Trustees. When it becomes necessary to handle a corporate matter (such as real estate), the Session can adjourn its

³ Some states restrict membership in corporations to individuals 18 years or older. *BCO* 25-11 requires churches in the PCA to follow all applicable civil laws. Thus, in those states that restrict corporate membership by age, incorporated churches must restrict their corporate membership accordingly. Only corporation members may vote in corporate meetings. Communicant members under 18 retain the full right to vote in congregational meetings on all matters that are not strictly corporation matters.

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. As stated in *BCO* 25-7, "the powers and duties of such [corporate] officers must not infringe upon the powers and duties of the Session or of the Board of Deacons."

B. Officers of the Corporation

BCO 25-7 does not distinguish between the corporate Board of Trustees and corporate officers (who are often employees of the corporation in the business world). The sample Bylaws provide for a Board of Trustees who would "be elected from among the members of the corporation in a regularly constituted congregational meeting" at the same time those men were being elected to serve on the Session. However, there is a need for individuals to serve as corporate officers, with authority delegated to them by the Board of Trustees to carry out the day-to-day business operations of the corporation. The sample Bylaws suggest that the following individuals serve as corporate officers: (1) President—the senior pastor, (2) Vice President(s)—the associate pastor and/or assistant pastor(s), (3) Secretary—the Clerk of Session, and (4) Treasurer—an individual elected by the Board of Trustees. This arrangement can be altered to fit the church's situation, but it allows having corporate officers (except for the treasurer) serve *ex officio*, keeping the corporation in the background as a tool that is used only when needed.⁴ 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, the Session, and the Board of Deacons 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 congregation (when corporate matters are brought before the congregation) 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 corporation by a church require the filing of an annual registration form. In most states, the form only asks for the names and addresses of the current Trustees and corporate officers. There is usually a nominal filing

⁴ This arrangement interprets *BCO* 25-7 to mean that "the officers of the corporation, whether they be given the title 'trustee' or some other title" refers to the group given legal authority over the corporation, i.e., the Board of Trustees. The corporate officers, by comparison, only have the delegated authority given to them by the Board of Trustees. This permits the pastoral staff to serve as President and Vice President, even though they are not members of the corporation and also permits the Board of Trustees to elect the Treasurer.

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

SAMPLES
ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC.
A NONPROFIT CORPORATION

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of the corporation is FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC., and the corporation may adopt such trade names as it desires.

ARTICLE II. AUTHORITY

The corporation is organized pursuant to the provisions of the [name the state] Nonprofit Corporation Code. The form of church government is provided for by *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America. The governing body is therein provided, i.e., the Session. The Board of Trustees provided by these Articles of Incorporation shall perform all corporate powers necessary and as required by the laws of the State of _____. Unless otherwise required by the laws of the State of _____ (provided they are not in conflict with the Holy Scripture or doctrine), any conflict between these Articles of Incorporation and *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America shall be resolved in favor of *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America. The First Presbyterian Church, as a body of believers recognizes only the sovereignty of God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all things. The Church shall be governed according to the tenets of the Faith contained in the Holy Scriptures, being the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible, and according to the doctrines of the Church contained in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America. The Church recognizes God's ordination of the civil authority and the legitimate laws in support thereof. The Church shall uphold the laws of the civil authority provided said laws are not in conflict with the Holy Scriptures or the doctrine of the Church contained in the Constitution as shall be determined by the Church.

ARTICLE III. PURPOSES

The corporation is organized exclusively for religious, educational and charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law), and such purposes shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

[The church should develop its own statement of purpose, which may be as brief or as long as desired. The following purpose #1 is given as an example.]

1. To be a growing Christian fellowship glorifying God in worship, nurturing people in Biblical faith, and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout our community and into the world; and
2. To do everything necessary, suitable or proper for the accomplishment, attainment or furtherance of (and to do every other act or thing incidental to, pertinent to, growing out of or

INCORPORATION

Exhibit A – 2

connected with) the purposes, objects or powers set forth in these Articles of Incorporation, whether alone or in association with others; to possess all the rights, powers and privileges now or hereafter conferred by law upon a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of _____, and, in general, to carry on any activities and to do any of the things herein set forth to the same extent as a natural person or partnership might or could do; provided that nothing herein set forth shall be construed as authorizing the corporation to possess any purpose, object or power to do any act or thing forbidden by law to a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of _____.

ARTICLE IV. DURATION

The corporation shall have perpetual duration.

ARTICLE V. RESTRICTIONS

Section 1. No Private Inurement. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its trustees, officers, or other private persons; except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article III hereof. The corporation shall not have capital stock or shareholders.

Section 2. No Substantial Lobbying. No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation.

Section 3. No Political Campaigning. The corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

ARTICLE VI. TRUSTEES

Section 1. Number. Directors for the corporation shall be known as "Trustees". The Board of Trustees shall consist of not fewer than three (3) members, and of not more than a maximum number determined by the Bylaws of the corporation as amended from time to time.

Section 2. Powers. The Board of Trustees shall manage the civil activities and affairs of the corporation, and shall have all the rights and powers of a board of directors under the laws of the State of _____ and of the United States, as well as such other rights and authority as are herein granted. Such rights and powers shall include, but not be limited to, the buying, selling and mortgaging of property for the church, the acquiring and conveying of title to such property, the holding and defending of title to the same, the managing of any permanent special funds entrusted to them for the furtherance of the purposes of the church, provided that such duties do not infringe upon the powers and duties of the Session or of the Board of Deacons. In buying, selling, and mortgaging real property the Trustees shall act solely under the authority of a corporation, granted in a duly constituted meeting of the corporation. The Board of Trustees shall have the power to adopt and amend the Bylaws by a majority vote, in any way not inconsistent

INCORPORATION

Exhibit A - 3

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. Members shall be those persons who have qualified and been admitted into the membership of the church according to the requirements and provisions of *The Book of Church order* of the Presbyterian Church in America and the Session of the First Presbyterian Church. Members shall be entitled to one vote each. The only votes that members shall make are for election of Trustees and for such items as permitted or required by *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America.

INCORPORATION
Exhibit A – 4

ARTICLE VIII. POWERS

Section 1. General. The corporation shall have all the rights and powers customary and proper for tax-exempt, nonprofit corporations, including the powers specifically enumerated in Section XX-X-XX of the [name of state] Code.

Section 2. Restrictions. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these Articles of Incorporation. The corporation shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or by a corporation to which contributions are deductible under Sections 170(b)(1)(A) and 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States internal revenue law).

ARTICLE IX. DISSOLUTION

Section 1. Dissolution. Dissolution must first be approved by two-thirds vote of the Session of First Presbyterian Church at a special meeting called for that purpose with appropriate notice given in writing stating the purpose of the meeting. Upon such approval by the Session, the membership of First Presbyterian Church must then approve such dissolution by majority vote at a specially called meeting pursuant to proper notice. The Board of Trustees may cease corporate activities and dissolve and liquidate the corporation by two-thirds vote only after the required approval by the Session and the membership of First Presbyterian Church.

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

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 _____.

INCORPORATION
Exhibit A – 5

ARTICLE XI. INCORPORATOR

The name and address of the incorporator, who is a citizen of the United States, is
_____, _____, Anytown, _____ 00000.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned attorney for, and representative of, the
Incorporator has executed these Articles of Incorporation, pursuant to [name of state] Code Section
XX-X-XX.

John C. Attorney
Attorney for and Representative of
The Incorporators

INCORPORATION
Exhibit B-1

MINUTES OF ACTION OF
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC.

We the members of FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC., do hereby adopt the following resolutions at a meeting of the said Corporation, duly called and held pursuant to applicable provisions of the [name of state] Nonprofit Corporation Code, and direct that the record of such actions shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Corporation.

A. Charter.

RESOLVED, that the Articles of Incorporation of this Corporation granted by the Secretary of State of [name of state] on [date of incorporation] be, and hereby are, accepted.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Corporation is hereby directed to place a copy of said Articles, together with the Certificate of the Secretary of State thereon in the Corporation minute book.

B. Bylaws.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the proposed Bylaws accompanying these Minutes be, and the same are hereby adopted as the Bylaws for this Corporation. The Secretary of the Corporation is hereby directed to incorporate said Bylaws in the minute book of the Corporation directly preceding these minutes and to attest the same under his hand and seal as the Bylaws so adopted.

C. Seal.

RESOLVED, that the seal impressed on the margin of this page is hereby accepted as the seal of the Corporation.

D. Election of Trustees.

RESOLVED, that the following persons are hereby recognized as Trustees of the Corporation, having been duly elected by the members of the Corporation: [list all active Ruling Elders or others as elected by the congregation].

E. Election of Officers.

RESOLVED, that the following persons are hereby elected to the offices shown, with each officer to serve until his respective successor is duly elected and qualified:

- (1) President/Senior Pastor. _____
- (2) Secretary/Clerk of Session. _____
- (3) Treasurer _____

INCORPORATION
Exhibit B-2F. 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.

H. Powers and Duties of Church Officers.

RESOLVED, that in accordance with Chapter 25 of *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America, along with Article VI of the Articles of Incorporation of this Corporation and the Introduction of the Bylaws of this Corporation, the Trustees and Officers of the Corporation shall refrain from exercising the powers and duties expressly assigned to the Session and Diaconate of the church by *The Book of Church Order* and do hereby acquiesce to the rights and authority of those bodies as detailed in *The Book of Church Order*.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of this Corporation intend for the routine conduct of the Corporation's business to be carried out by the Session and Diaconate of the church and do hereby delegate such matters to those bodies.

I. Organizational Expenses.

RESOLVED, that the officers of the Corporation be and hereby are authorized to pay all fees and expenses incident to and necessary for the organization of the Corporation and to complete all forms as may be presented or required by the Internal Revenue Service

INCORPORATION
Exhibit B-3

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

BYLAWS
OF
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC.

Introduction.

The operation of First Presbyterian Church shall in all instances be according to the Holy Scriptures and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, which consists of the doctrinal standards set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms and *The Book of Church Order*, as adopted by the Presbyterian Church in America. These aforementioned documents include the doctrinal and procedural positions of local churches that are members of the presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America. First Presbyterian Church is a member of the _____ Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America.

First Presbyterian Church is to be governed by the Session. This governing body is responsible for all of the operations of the Church, including receipt and disposition of funds. Therefore, the Treasurer of the Corporation is subject to the Session of the Church. Authority may be delegated to such persons as permitted by *The Book of Church Order*, including delegation of certain authority to the Treasurer of the Board of Deacons of the Church, should the Board of Deacons appoint a Treasurer other than the Treasurer of the Corporation.

These Bylaws are for the purpose of governing the Board of Trustees and the Officers of the nonprofit Corporation, FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC. They are to provide procedures wherein actions by these officers are necessary. These Bylaws shall not govern the operation of the Session or the Board of Deacons.

The Board of Trustees and corporate Officers are responsible for the lawful corporate affairs of the Corporation. They are subject to *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America, the lawful directions of the Session of First Presbyterian Church, the laws of the State of _____, the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws.

The purposes of First Presbyterian Church are those stated in the Articles of Incorporation. These Bylaws are to conform in all aspects to those purposes. Further, at any time that there is a conflict between these Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation, the Articles of Incorporation shall govern. At any time there is a conflict between these Bylaws and *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America, except as may be required by the laws of the State of _____ or the United States of America (provided such laws are not in conflict with the Holy Scripture or doctrine), *The Book of Church Order* shall govern.

INCORPORATION
Exhibit C – 2

ARTICLE I. OFFICES

Section 1.01. Registered Office and Agent. The address of the registered office of the Corporation is 123 Main Street, Anytown, _____ 00000, and the name of the registered agent at this address is _____.

Section 1.02. Other Offices. The Corporation may have officers at such place or places within or without the State of _____ as the Board of Trustees may from time to time appoint or as the business of the Corporation may require or make desirable.

ARTICLE II. TRUSTEES

Section 2.01. Powers. The civil activities and affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by its Board of Trustees. In addition to the powers and authority expressly conferred on it by the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws, the Board of Trustees may exercise all such powers of the corporation and do all such lawful acts and things as are not prohibited by law (provided such laws are not in conflict with the Holy Scriptures or doctrine), by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, by the Articles of Incorporation, or by these Bylaws. Such powers and authority shall include, but not be limited to, the buying, selling and mortgaging of property for the church, the acquiring and conveying of title to such property, the holding and defending of title to the same, and the managing of any permanent special funds entrusted to them for the furtherance of the purposes of the church, provided that such duties do not infringe upon the powers and duties of the Session or of the Board of Deacons. In buying, selling, and mortgaging real property, the Trustees shall act solely under the authority of the Corporation, granted in a duly constituted meeting of the members of the Corporation.

Section 2.02. Number. The Board of Trustees shall consist of not more than fifteen (15) nor less than three (3) persons, the exact number of which shall be fixed by a resolution of the Trustees from time to time.

Section 2.03. Qualifications. Election. and Term. Trustees shall be of the age of eighteen (18) years or over but need not be residents of the State of _____. The Board of Trustees shall consist of all current, active Ruling Elders serving on the Session of the church. Each Ruling Elder/Trustee shall be elected according to the qualifications and procedure detailed in *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America. Each Trustee shall serve on the Board of Trustees as long as he is an active member of the Session of the church.

2.04. No Compensation. The Trustees shall serve without compensation, except that the Board by resolution may provide for reasonable expenses for attendance at meetings of the Board to be reimbursed.

Section 2.05. Regular Meetings. Meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held at such place, either within or outside the State of _____, as may from time to time be fixed by resolution of the Board of Trustees, or as may be specified in the notice of meeting. Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held at such time as may from time to time be fixed by resolution of the Board of Trustees.

Section 2.06. Special Meetings. Special meetings may be held if called pursuant to Section 2.07 herein with at least two days' notice by telephone, e-mail, or personal delivery, or five days' notice by first class mail, of the time and place of the meeting to each Trustee.

INCORPORATION

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Section 2.07. Calling Meetings. Meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called by the President of the Corporation when he may judge it requisite or when requested to do so by any two of the Trustees.

Section 2.08. Waiver of Notice. Notice of a meeting of the Board of Trustees need not be given in any event to any Trustee who signs a waiver of notice either before or after the meeting. Attendance of a Trustee at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting and waiver of any and all objections to the place of the meeting, the time of the meeting, or the manner in which it has been called or convened, except if a Trustee states, at the beginning of the meeting, any such objection or objections to the transaction of business.

Section 2.09. Contents of Notice. The business to be transacted at, and the purpose of, any regular or special meeting of the Board of Trustees need not be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such meeting.

Section 2.10. Quorum. A majority of the number of Trustees stated in the Articles of Incorporation or the number last fixed by the Trustees, as the case may be, at a meeting duly assembled, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the act of a majority of such Trustees present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Trustees except as may be otherwise specifically provided by law, by the Articles of Incorporation, or by these Bylaws. If at any meeting of the Board of Trustees there shall be less than a quorum present, a majority of those present may adjourn the meeting, without further notice, from time to time until quorum shall have been obtained.

Section 2.11. Conduct of Meetings. The President of the Corporation, and in his absence the acting President, named by the Board of Trustees, shall preside at meetings of the Board of Trustees. The Secretary of the Corporation, or in the Secretary's absence any person appointed by the presiding Officer, shall act as Secretary for meetings of the Board of Trustees. Meetings shall be governed by *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America and most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, except where Robert's Rules of Order are inconsistent therewith.

Section 2.12. Telephone Participation. Trustees may participate in meetings of the Board of Trustees through use of conference telephone, video conference, or similar communications equipment so long as all Trustees participating in the meeting can hear one another. Such participation shall constitute personal presence at the meeting, and consequently shall be counted toward the required quorum in any vote.

Section 2.13. Written Consent. Any action required or permitted to be taken at any meeting of the Board of Trustees or of any committee thereof may be taken without a meeting if a written consent, setting forth the action so taken, is signed by all members of the Board or of such committee, as the case may be. Such written consent shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Board or committee.

Section 2.14. Adjournment. A majority of the Trustees present, whether or not a quorum exists, may adjourn any meeting of the Board of Trustees to another time and place. Notice of any such adjourned meeting shall be given to the Trustees who were not present at the time of the adjournment and, unless the time and place of the adjourned meeting are announced at the time of the adjournment, to the other Trustees, with at least two days' notice by telephone or personal delivery, or five days' notice by first class mail, of the time and place of the meeting.

INCORPORATION

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Section 2.15. Removal. The Board of Trustees may declare the position of a Trustee vacant, and may remove such Trustee for cause, on occurrence of any of the following events: the Trustee has been declared of unsound mind by a final order of court, the Trustee has been convicted of a felony, the Trustee is no longer a member of First Presbyterian Church, or the Trustee has been deposed from the office of Ruling Elder through church discipline.

Section 2.16. Resignation. Any Trustee may resign by giving written notice to the President or the Secretary of the Corporation. The resignation shall be effective on receipt, unless the notice specifies a later time for the effective date of such resignation, or if the Corporation would be left without the minimum number of duly elected Trustees in which event the resignation shall be effective upon the election of a successor. If the resignation is effective at a future time, a successor may be elected before that time to take office when the resignation becomes effective.

Section 2.17. Vacancies. A vacancy on the Board of Trustees shall exist on the death, resignation, or removal of any Trustee; whenever the number of Trustees authorized is increased; and on failure of the Congregation to elect the full number of Ruling Elders/Trustees authorized. Such vacancies can only be filled for the remainder of the term by the election of additional Ruling Elders/Trustees by the Congregation.

ARTICLE III. COMMITTEES

Section 3.01. Committees. Committees may be established by the Board from time to time; shall consist of two or more Trustees, as provided by the Board; and shall be authorized to exercise the authority of the Board of Trustees to the extent provided in the resolution creating any such committee. Any such committee shall act by majority vote; and shall have a quorum of one-third of the member Trustees, but in any event not less than two Trustees.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

Section 4.01. Election. The Board of Trustees shall elect a Treasurer. The President, Secretary and any Vice Presidents shall serve ex officio as provided below.

Section 4.02. Other Officers. The Board of Trustees at any time and from time to time may appoint such other Officers as it shall deem necessary, including one or more Assistant Treasurers, and one or more Assistant Secretaries, who shall hold their offices for such terms as shall be determined by the Board and shall exercise such powers and perform such duties as shall be determined from time to time by the Board of Trustees or the President.

Section 4.03. Multiple Offices. Any person may hold any two or more Offices, except that no person may hold both the Offices of President and Secretary.

Section 4.04. Compensation. The salaries of the Officers of the Corporation shall be fixed by the Session of the church.

Section 4.05. Term. Each Officer of the Corporation shall hold office until his successor is chosen or until his earlier resignation, death, or removal.

Section 4.06. President. The Senior Pastor of the church shall serve as the President of the Corporation. The President shall preside at all meetings of the members of the Board of Trustees and at all Congregational meetings; shall be an advisory member of all committees; shall sign such papers as may be required by his office or as may be directed by the Board of Trustees; shall make

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such reports and recommendations to the Board of Trustees of the Corporation at any regular or special meetings, concerning the work and affairs of the Corporation, as in his judgment may be necessary for their information and guidance; may require such reports from the Treasurer and Secretary, as in his judgment are necessary; shall manage the affairs and direct the work and employees of the Corporation, subject to and in accordance with the directions of the Session; shall be authorized to incur expenses in accordance with the approved budget, or as directed by the Session; and shall perform such other duties as may be incidental to the office.

Section 4.07. Vice Presidents. The Associate and/or Assistant Pastors of the church may be named by the Board to serve as Vice Presidents of the Corporation. The Vice Presidents, in the order named by the Board of Trustees, shall perform the duties of the President in the event of the absence, resignation, refusal to act, or inability to act of the President. One Vice President may be designated by the Board as Executive Vice President.

Section 4.08. Secretary. The Clerk of the Session shall serve as the Secretary of the Corporation. The Secretary shall issue in writing all notices of meetings; shall notify individuals of their election to the Session and the Board of Trustees; shall keep complete records and minutes of meetings of the Board and of the Congregation; shall furnish the Board of Trustees with a list of officers, members of the Board of Trustees, and members of committees whose terms are expiring; shall mail such other notices as may be directed by the Board of Trustees; shall be custodian of all records of the Corporation, except such records and papers as shall be kept by the Treasurer as herein provided; shall sign such papers as may be required by his office or as directed by the Board of Trustees; and shall perform such other duties as may be incidental to the office.

Section 4.09. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Congregation but may or may not be a member of the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer shall receive all moneys of the Corporation and have custody thereof; shall deposit the funds of the Corporation in one or more banks selected by the Board of Trustees; shall disburse funds in accordance with the directions of and upon the signatures of persons designated by the Board; shall keep a full account of all moneys received and paid out and shall make such reports thereof to the President and Board of Trustees as they may require; shall receive and have custody of all deeds, securities, notes, contracts and other financial papers of the Corporation and shall place them for safekeeping in the safe deposit vaults of a bank designated by the Board and under such rules as to access as the Board shall determine; shall keep full account of all deeds, securities, notes and financial papers of the Corporation and shall make such accountings and reports thereof to the President and Board of Trustees as they may require; shall cause the books of account of the Corporation to be reviewed at least once annually by a public accountant approved by the Board of Trustees shall cause to be prepared and shall present annually at a meeting of the Trustees a comprehensive financial statement including the report of the accountant shall sign such papers as may be required by his/her office or as may be directed by the Board of Trustees; and shall perform such other duties as may be incidental to the office. He/She shall not be required to give any bonds, unless the Board of Trustees provide otherwise and in the amounts as they shall determine, for the faithful performance of his/her duties. The said books of account shall be open at any time during regular business hours to inspections by any Trustee, the President, and the Secretary.

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Section 4.10. Contracts. Unless authorized in a particular instance by the Board of Trustees by resolution, no Officer, employee, or agent shall have any authority to bind the corporation by any contract, to pledge its assets or credit, or to render it liable pecuniarily, for any amount in excess of \$500. If so authorized, or if less than \$500, any of the foregoing Officers singly may execute contracts or deliver instruments on behalf of the Corporation, pledge its assets or credit, or render it liable pecuniarily.

Section 4.11. Removal. The Board of Trustees may remove any Officer other than President or Vice President with or without cause whenever in its judgment the best interests of the Corporation will be served thereby. Removal of the President or a Vice President shall be handled according to *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America. Election or appointment of an Officer or other agent shall not of itself create contract rights.

Section 4.12. Resignation. Any Officer may resign at any time on written notice to the Board of Trustees, to take effect immediately unless a future effective date is specified, without prejudice to any rights of the Corporation under any contract to which the Officer is a party.

Section 4.13. Vacancies. A vacancy in any Office shall exist on the death, resignation, or removal of any Officer. In case of a vacancy, the Board of Trustees may elect a new Officer, except for the Offices of President and Vice President, which shall be filled by men selected according to the procedures detailed in *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America. In case of the absence of any Officer of the corporation, or for any other reason that the Board of Trustees may deem sufficient, the Board of Trustees may delegate, for the time being, any or all of the powers or duties of such Officer to any other Officer or to any Trustee.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

Section 5.01. Qualifications. Members shall be those persons who have qualified and been admitted into the communing membership of the church according to the requirements and provisions of *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America and the Session of the church. Each member shall be entitled to one vote each.

Section 5.02. Meetings. Meetings of the Congregation of the church, when called pursuant to the procedures required by *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America, shall be considered to be meetings of the Corporation when the purpose of calling such meetings is for the consideration of matters concerning civil law, such as the buying, selling or mortgaging of real estate. Such Congregational meetings shall be conducted according to the rules and procedures of *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America and the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, except where *Robert's Rules of Order* are inconsistent therewith.

ARTICLE VI. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 6.01. Amendment. Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation may be made by resolution of the Board of Trustees at a meeting at which two-thirds of the entire membership of the Board are present and voting therefore. The Board of Trustees shall have the power to adopt and amend by a majority vote these Bylaws in any way not inconsistent with *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America, the Articles of Incorporation or the laws of the State

INCORPORATION

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of _____ or the United States (provided such laws are not in conflict with the Holy Scriptures or doctrine).

Section 6.02. Dissolution. The Board of Trustees may cease corporate activities and dissolve the corporation as provided in Article IX of the Articles of Incorporation of the corporation.

Section 6.03. Indemnification. The Corporation shall indemnify its Trustees and Officers to the extent permitted by Sections XX-X-XXX and XX-X-XXX [cite the relevant portions of the state code] [name of state] Code and may indemnify its employees and agents to the same or a narrower extent. The Board of Trustees may maintain liability insurance coverage for any or all of the Corporation's Trustees, Officers, employees, or agents.

Section 6.04. Racial Nondiscrimination Policy. The corporation's programs, including but not limited to its educational programs, shall admit persons of any race to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students or other persons in such programs. The corporation shall not discriminate on the basis of race in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, if any, and other programs.

Section 6.05. Corporate Seal. The seal of the Corporation shall consist of an impression bearing the name of the Corporation around the perimeter and the words "Corporate Seal" and such other information, including the year of incorporation, in the center thereof as is desired. In lieu thereof, the corporation may use an impression or writing bearing the words "Corporate Seal" enclosed in parenthesis or scroll which shall also be deemed the seal of the Corporation. Section 6.06. Fiscal Year. The Fiscal year of the Corporation shall be such period as the Board of Trustees shall determine, and unless otherwise so determined, shall begin on the first day of January of each year and end on the last day of December of each year.

INCORPORATION
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CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY

I hereby certify that the foregoing Bylaws comprising 7 pages constitute the Bylaws of the Corporation, that said Bylaws were duly adopted at a meeting of the Board of Trustees held on _____, 20____, and that I am the duly elected and acting Secretary of the Corporation,

Dated _____20____,

Secretary

INCORPORATION
Exhibit D – 1

MINUTES OF ACTION OF
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC.

TAKEN BY

UNANIMOUS WRITTEN CONSENT IN LIEU OF ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

As permitted by the [name of state] Nonprofit Corporation Code, we, the undersigned, being all the Trustees of FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, INC., do hereby unanimously consent to and adopt the following resolutions, which action shall have the same force and effect as if taken by us by unanimous affirmative vote at a meeting of the Board of Trustees of said Corporation, duly called and held pursuant to applicable provisions of the Nonprofit Corporation Code, and direct that the written consent to such action shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Trustees of the Corporation.

A. Charter.

RESOLVED, that the Articles of Incorporation of this Corporation granted by the Secretary of State of [name of state] on [date of certificate of incorporation] be, and hereby are, accepted.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Corporation is hereby directed to place a copy of said Articles, together with the Certificate of the Secretary of State thereon in the Corporation minute book.

B. Bylaws.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the proposed Bylaws accompanying this Consent of Trustees be, and the same are hereby, adopted as the Bylaws for this Corporation. The Secretary of the Corporation is hereby directed to incorporate said Bylaws in the minute book of the Corporation directly preceding this written Consent of Trustees and to attest the same under his hand and seal as the Bylaws so adopted.

C. Seal.

RESOLVED, that the seal impressed on the margin of this page is hereby accepted as the seal of the Corporation.

D. Election of Trustees.

RESOLVED, that the following persons are hereby recognized as Trustees of the Corporation, having been elected by the members of the Corporation to serve as the current, active Ruling Elders of First Presbyterian Church: Samuel Jones, Fred Holly, and Joe Miller. [In a mission church situation, it would be appropriate to name the pastor and members of his advisory or steering committee as Trustees and rewording this section to read: RESOLVED, that the following persons are hereby elected as Trustees of the

INCORPORATION

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Corporation, subject only to their acceptance of such position: Samuel Jones, Fred Holly, and Joe Miller.]

E. Election of Officers.

RESOLVED, that the following persons are hereby elected to the offices shown or recognized *ex officio* as an officer, where appropriate, with each officer to serve until his respective successor is duly elected and qualified:

- (1) President/Senior Pastor. [name of pastor]
- (2) Secretary/Clerk of Session. [name of clerk]
- (3) Treasurer [name of treasurer]

F. Bank Account.

RESOLVED, that the bank resolution(s) in the form attached to this Consent of Trustees dealing with the designation of the bank or banks named herein as depository or depositories for the Corporation be and hereby are adopted as resolutions of the Board of Trustees;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the proper officers of the Corporation be and hereby are authorized and directed to open such additional accounts with said bank or any other bank as may be selected as depositories for the Corporation in the discretion of any of the Officers of the Corporation, and to deposit therein funds of the Corporation, drafts, checks and notes of the Corporation payable on said accounts to be made in the corporate name;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that such officers be and hereby are authorized to execute and deliver corporate resolutions on such forms as may be presented or required by said banks, said forms to be completed with such information as the executing officers may deem to be in the best interest of the Corporation;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that all such resolutions which may be required by banks hereafter selected by the Corporation dealing with the designation of such banks as depositories be and hereby are adopted as resolutions of the Board of Trustees; and the Secretary or Assistant Secretary of the Corporation may hereafter attest to and execute such bank resolutions and/or forms without additional action of the Board of Trustees.

G. Fiscal Year.

RESOLVED, that the fiscal year of the Corporation is hereby determined to commence on January 1 of each year and end on December 31 of the same year, until otherwise determined by this Board of Trustees.

H. Powers and Duties of Church Officers.

RESOLVED, that in accordance with Chapter 25 of *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America, along with Article VI of the Articles of Incorporation of this Corporation and the Introduction to the Bylaws of this Corporation, the Trustees and Officers of this Corporation shall refrain from exercising the powers and duties expressly assigned to the Session and Diaconate of the church by *The Book of Church*

INCORPORATION

Exhibit D – 3

Order of the Presbyterian Church in America and do hereby acquiesce to the rights and authority of those bodies as detailed in The Book of Church Order.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Trustees and Officers of this Corporation intend for the routine conduct of the Corporation's business to be carried out by the Session and Diaconate of the church and do hereby delegate such matters to those bodies.

I. Organizational Expenses.

RESOLVED, that the officers of the Corporation be and hereby are authorized to pay all fees and expenses incident to and necessary for the organization of the Corporation and to complete all forms as may be presented or required by the Internal Revenue Service of the United States, said forms to be completed with such information as the Internal Revenue Service may deem to be required of the Corporation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the hand and seal of each member of the Board of Trustees is set forth below, effective as of the ____ day of _____, 20____.

Samuel Jones, Trustee

Fred Holly, Trustee

Joe Miller, Trustee

(CORPORATE SEAL)

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" (*MI5GA*, Appendix Q, 444f.). The report may be found in *MI5GA*, 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

INCORPORATION

Exhibit A – 2

- 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

INCORPORATION
Exhibit A - 3

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)(1)(A) and 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States internal revenue law).

ARTICLE IX. DISSOLUTION

Section 1. Dissolution. Dissolution must 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
 - 3-4. Attendance
- 4. Officers
 - 4-1. Moderator and Vice-Moderator
 - 4-2. Stated Clerk
 - 4-3. Recording Clerk
 - 4-4. Treasurer
 - 4-5. Parliamentarian
 - 4-6. Trustees
- 5. Committees and Commissions
 - 5-1. Standing Committees
 - 5-2. Permanent Committees
 - 5-3. Nominating Committee
 - 5-4. Church Care Committee and Sessional Records
 - 5-5. Commissions
- 6. Government
 - 6-1. Rules of Order
 - 6-2. Standing Rules of Presbytery
- 7. General Policies
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1. Name

Covenant is the name of the presbytery in the Presbyterian Church in America whose constituting churches are in south and east Arkansas, west Tennessee, and north Mississippi.

2. Relationship of Covenant Presbytery to its Constituting Churches

2-1. Covenant Presbytery is composed of all teaching elders and congregations within its geographical bounds that have been accepted by the presbytery, together with the mission churches for which it has the responsibility of initiation and oversight.

2-2. Any congregation in the geographical bounds of Covenant Presbytery may ask for admission into the presbytery, upon which request the presbytery shall select a commission for the enablement of admission, according to *BCO* 13-8.

2-3. New churches are necessarily organized by the presbytery.

2-4. The jurisdiction of the individual congregation is in its session, and, if it has no session, is in the presbytery.

2-5. Since membership in the presbytery is voluntary, congregations may remove themselves from the relationship to Covenant Presbytery when they so desire.

2-6. Properties are owned by the individual congregations, not by or with any higher court.

2-7. Covenant Presbytery is responsible for the oversight of individual member congregations, and exercises this responsibility chiefly through the examination of session records each year.

2-8. Covenant Presbytery budgets money for its various operations of service, and asks the local congregations to make contributions for that service, sending, if possible, at the beginning of each year, quarter or month, as it is necessary for the payment of presbytery expenses.

3. Meetings

3-1. Stated Meetings

3-1.a. Presbytery shall hold (3) three Stated Meetings a year, on the first Tuesday in February and October, and the fourth Tuesday in May at 9:30 a.m. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at the February and October meetings. The place of each meeting shall be determined at the previous meeting. The Presbytery may approve and announce special observances, memorial services and other particular forms of worship agreeable to the word of God and unto His glory.

3-1.b. A proposed docket shall be prepared by the Stated Clerk for each meeting of Presbytery in consultation with the Moderator, Chairmen of the Permanent Committees and the Administration Committee, and a copy suitable for reproduction of all communications and reports from individuals, committees, and Church courts which require action by the Presbytery shall be received by the Stated Clerk three (3) weeks prior to the Stated Meetings of Presbytery. The Stated Clerk shall send one (1) copy of the above and the docket to each Teaching Elder and church on the rolls of Presbytery, or more if requested, ten (10) days prior to the Stated Meetings of Presbytery. Requests for special speakers or presentations from outside Presbytery shall be referred to the appropriate Permanent Committee and approved by that Committee before being admitted to the docket. Presbytery shall adopt the docket by a majority vote, and the body may amend the docket at any time during the meeting by a majority vote.

3-2. Adjourned Meetings

Adjourned Meetings may be held as determined necessary by Presbytery for continuing the business of regular Stated Meetings.

3-3. Called Meetings

All called meetings of Covenant Presbytery shall meet the requirements of the Book of Church Order 13-12. In addition, there shall be no called meetings of Presbytery without either (a) the approval of one-fourth (1/4) of the Sessions of Covenant Presbytery, or (b) the unanimous vote of all members present at a properly called meeting of a committee or commission of Covenant

Presbytery to have a called meeting of Presbytery, or (c) the majority vote of the commissioners present at a stated or called meeting of Covenant Presbytery to have a called meeting of Presbytery.

3-4. Attendance

Unless honorably retired, declared infirm, or permitted to labor outside the geographical bounds of Presbytery, all Teaching Elders are expected to attend all meetings of Presbytery. Permission for absences shall be requested through the Stated Clerk or from the floor during the Stated Clerk's report.

4. Officers

4-1. Moderator and Vice-Moderator

4-1.a. The Moderator and the Vice-Moderator shall be elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee for a term of one (1) year, subject to re-election at the will of Presbytery. Election shall normally be held at the October Stated Meeting, with term of office to begin on January 1st the following.

4-1.b. In odd numbered years, the Moderator will be a Teaching Elder and the Vice-Moderator, a Ruling Elder; in even numbered years, the Moderator will be a Ruling Elder and the Vice-Moderator, a Teaching Elder.

4-1.c. The Moderator shall preside over all Meetings of Presbytery. In the event of the Moderator's absence, the Vice-Moderator shall preside over the Meeting as the acting Moderator. If both Moderator and Vice-Moderator are absent, the last Moderator present or the last Vice-Moderator present or the Teaching Elder longest-a-member-of-the-court may hold the chair until a new Moderator is elected.

4-1.d. The Moderator has all the authority necessary for the preservation of order, for the proper and expeditious conduct of all business before the court according to the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America and Robert's Rules of Order.

4-1.e. In any emergency the Moderator may, by circular letter or telephone notification, change the time or place (or both) of meetings to which the court stands adjourned, giving reasonable notice of such change.

4-1.f. The Moderator shall appoint the members of Standing Committees and their chairmen.

4-1.g. The Moderator shall have the responsibility for the opening worship at each Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

4-1.h. The Moderator is responsible for appointing a time keeper. Debate on a main motion shall be limited to twenty (20) minutes unless extended. In the first twenty minutes of debate on the main motion, each speaker shall be limited to a maximum of five (5) minutes. In the event Presbytery wishes to extend the debate, each speaker shall be limited to three (3) minutes. Time extension shall be approved by a simple majority of Presbytery and shall be in increments of six (6) minutes.

4-1.i. The Moderator and the Vice-Moderator, by the authority vested in them, are ex-officio members of the Administration Committee.

4-2. Stated Clerk

4-2.a. The Stated Clerk shall be elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee for a term of one (1) year, subject to re-election at the will of Presbytery. Election shall

normally be held at the October Stated Meeting, with term of office to begin on January 1st the following.

4-2.b. The Stated Clerk shall receive an annual stipend to be fixed by Presbytery.

4-2.c. He shall nominate to Presbytery Temporary Clerks, who, upon election, shall serve under the direction of the Stated Clerk.

4-2.d. He shall refer communications to appropriate committees when practicable, and present to Presbytery all other communications intended for that body.

4-2.e. He shall promptly communicate all special orders of Presbytery.

4-2.f. He shall sign and issue promptly all official papers of Presbytery not otherwise provided for, and he shall conduct the official correspondence of the Presbytery.

4-2.g. He shall have the Minutes, proceedings, and reports as adopted by Presbytery reproduced and distributed following each meeting and shall preserve carefully the official copy of the permanent Minutes.

4-2.h. In order for the Stated Clerk to properly edit the minutes submitted by the Recording Clerk, the Presbytery shall furnish and maintain adequate recording equipment to make an electronic record of each meeting.

4-2.i. He shall receive invitations from churches desiring to host Presbytery Meetings and report these to Presbytery.

4-2.j. He shall keep a file of annual statistical reports received from churches of Presbytery for five (5) years.

4-2.k. He shall keep an accurate roll of the churches, Clerks of Sessions, and Teaching Elders of Covenant Presbytery.

4-2.l. He shall advise the Moderator in every possible way, by keeping him informed of matters requiring his attention, giving notice for him of Called Meetings of Presbytery or changes in time and place of Meetings, making the facilities of the office available to him for correspondence or other matters, and rendering any service requested by the Moderator in connection with the operation of Presbytery.

4-2.m. He shall plan and compile the docket for each Meeting of Presbytery in consultation with the Moderator, the chairmen of Permanent Committees, and the Administration Committee. Requests for special speakers or presentations from outside Presbytery shall be referred to the appropriate Permanent Committee and approved by that Committee before being added to the docket.

4-2.n. The Stated Clerk shall send one (1) copy of all committee reports which require action by Presbytery and the docket to each Teaching Elder and church on the rolls of Presbytery, or more if requested, ten (10) days prior to the Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

4-2.o. He shall keep a historical record of Presbytery from year to year and shall preserve all such records.

4-2.p. He shall notify in writing within fifteen (15) days after the Meeting of Presbytery each member who has been elected or appointed to a Committee of Presbytery. It shall be the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to provide the Stated Clerk with accurate names and addresses of the persons elected by Presbytery to membership on any Committee of Presbytery.

4-2.q. He shall prepare a suggested operating budget for the operation of his office, to be presented to the Administration Committee at its meeting prior to the October Meeting of Presbytery.

4-2.r. He shall be an ex-officio member of Presbytery's Administration Committee.

4-2.s. In consultation with the Church Care Committee, he shall, prior to each of the three Stated Meetings of Presbytery, include in the docket a list of the churches whose Sessional Records are scheduled for examination. Two months prior to each Stated Meeting, he is to remind each church Session whose records are due for examination that they need to mail a copy of their unexamined

records to the Chairman of the Church Care Committee no later than six weeks prior to the upcoming Stated Meeting.

4-2.t. He shall send out a directory by February 1 of each year and it shall contain:

4-2.t.1. The names, addresses and telephone numbers of the Stated Clerk, the Recording Clerk, the Presbytery Treasurer, and the Editor of the Covenant Presbytery newsletter or newspaper, when one is being published.

4-2.t.2. The names, addresses and telephone numbers of each of the members of the permanent Committees of Presbytery, namely, Administration, Candidates, Christian Education, Church Care, Credentials, Mission to North America, Mission to the World, and Nominating. The members of each Committee shall be listed by classes and the chairman of each noted.

4-3. Recording Clerk

4-3.a. The Recording Clerk shall be elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee for a term of one (1) year, subject to re-election at the will of Presbytery. Election shall normally be held at the October Stated Meeting, with term of office to begin on January 1st following.

4-3.b. The Recording Clerk shall receive an annual stipend to be fixed by Presbytery.

4-3.c. He shall be given two (2) copies of all committee reports as presented to Presbytery for inclusion in the Minutes and a written copy of all motions adopted by Presbytery.

4-3.d. As soon as practicable, he shall convey the Minutes in type written form (or any other form acceptable to the Stated Clerk), properly recorded, to the Stated Clerk for editing and publishing.

4-4. Treasurer

4-4.a. The Presbytery Treasurer shall be elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee for a term of one (1) year, subject to re-election at the will of Presbytery. Election shall normally be held at the October Stated Meeting with the term of office to begin January 1st following.

4-4.b. The Treasurer shall receive an annual stipend fixed by Presbytery.

4-4.c. He shall receive and record all funds contributed to Presbytery, shall discharge all designated funds as directed, and shall disburse all undesignated funds under the guidelines of Presbytery. All disbursements shall be approved by the respective Committees of Presbytery.

4-4.d. He shall give an accounting of the funds to the Presbytery at each Stated Meeting.

4-4.e. He shall be an ex-officio member of the Administration Committee.

4-5. Parliamentarian

4-5.a. The Parliamentarian shall be elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee for a term of one (1) year, subject to re-election at the will of Presbytery. Election shall normally be held at the October Stated Meeting, with term of office to begin January 1st following.

4-5.b. He shall advise the Moderator and Presbytery concerning the alternatives of parliamentary order available to the court as to be expeditious in the dispatch of all business before the court while being in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

4-5.c. He shall advise the Recording and Stated Clerks as to the appropriate wording so the Minutes of Presbytery accurately reflect the actions of the court while being in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

4-6. Trustees

4-6.a. The Trustees of Presbytery shall be composed of six (6) members, with parity of Teaching and Ruling Elders or Deacons. Members shall be elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee, for a term of three (3) years, subject to re-election at the will of Presbytery. Election shall normally be held at the October Stated Meeting with terms of office to begin January 1st following.

4-6.b. They shall hold title in the name of Presbytery to any real property or assets.

4-6.c. They shall administer such property or assets as Presbytery's agents when so directed by Presbytery.

5. Committees and Commissions

5-1. Standing Committees

5-1.a. The Standing Committee shall include Resolution and Thanks. The Moderator shall appoint these Committee(s) at each Meeting of Presbytery from the members present, shall name the chairman of each, and shall name at least two (2) members to the Resolution and Thanks Committee.

5-2. Permanent Committees

5-2.a. The Permanent Committees shall consist of Administration, Christian Education, Candidates, Church Care, Credentials, Mission to North America, and Mission to the World. Each Committee shall be composed of not less than six (6) members with parity of Teaching and Ruling Elders or Deacons, to be divided into three or more classes of equal number. Members shall be elected by Presbytery upon nomination by the Nominating Committee and shall not be eligible to be elected to a consecutive term on any given Committee. Members elected to fill unexpired terms shall be eligible to serve one full term additionally. Two alternate members with parity of Teaching and Ruling Elders or Deacons shall be elected annually to each Committee, who shall be required to attend the Committee Meetings and vote in the absence of any principal members. Elections shall normally be held at the October Stated Meeting of Presbytery with terms of office to begin upon election.

5-2.b. The Permanent Committees shall meet as needed in order to fulfill their appointed responsibilities, and the quorum shall be at least one half the number of the principal member positions. Alternates present count toward a quorum. Those members habitually absent shall be reported to Presbytery at the May Stated Meeting.

5-2.c. The Permanent Committees shall elect their own chairmen and other officers from their membership annually. Each Committee is urged to select a chairman, vice-chairman and secretary from different classes.

5-2.d. The Permanent Committees shall report to Presbytery at each Stated Meeting.

5-2.e. The members of Presbytery shall serve on only two (2) Permanent Committees as principals or alternates at the same time including the Nominating Committee.

5-2.f. Committee Reports which require action by Presbytery shall be sent by the chairman or secretary of the Committee to the Stated Clerk at least three (3) weeks prior to the Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

5-2.g. The Chairmen of the Permanent Committees shall submit their proposed committee budgets to the Administration Committee by the September meeting of the Administration Committee for consideration at the October Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

5-2.h. Each Permanent Committee shall operate according to its own Presbytery approved policy manual and changes in the manual will require the adoption of Presbytery. Copies of the manuals shall be sent to the Clerk of Session of each church and to each Teaching Elder in Presbytery and be continually updated with subsequent changes by the mailing of supplements.

5-2.i. The chairman of the Candidates, Christian Education, Church Care, Credentials, Mission to North America, and Mission to the World Committees are ex-officio members of the Administration Committee and particularly when they have significant business to propose to the Administration Committee or to the Presbytery.

5-2.j. At the fall meeting the Administration Committee, with the help of the Treasurer, shall furnish the churches with a per member cost of operating the Presbytery.

5-2.k. Whenever a permanent committee is given a continuing power of a commission, this will be noted in an appendix to the Standing Rules as long as the committee is entrusted with that power.

5-3. Nominating Committee

5-3.a. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of six (6) members with parity of Teaching and Ruling Elders or Deacons, to be divided into two (2) classes of equal number. Members shall be elected by Presbytery at the May Stated Meeting of Presbytery upon nomination from the floor, with terms of office to begin immediately upon election. One Teaching Elder and two Ruling Elders or Deacons shall be elected on odd numbered years, and two Teaching Elders and one Ruling Elder or Deacon shall be elected on even numbered years. The quorum shall be at least one half of the elected members. The Committee shall elect its own chairman and other officers annually.

5-3.b. The Committee shall report to Presbytery at the October Stated Meeting by submitting nominations for all Presbytery committees and other vacancies and shall report at other meetings as vacancies occur.

5-3.c. The Committee shall also make nominations to Presbytery for the appropriate nominations to General Assembly.

5-3.d. The Committee shall submit its nominations to the Stated Clerk three (3) weeks prior to the October Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

5-4. Church Care Committee and Sessional Records

5-4.a. Each church Session, prior to the Stated Meeting assigned to it by the Stated Clerk, is to deliver a copy of its unexamined court records to the Church Care Committee. All efforts should be made to see that no more than one-third (1/3) of the total roll of churches in Presbytery be examined at each Stated Meeting.

5-4.b. Each church Session whose records are scheduled for examination shall mail (or otherwise deliver) a copy of their unexamined records to the Chairman of the Church Care Committee no later than six weeks prior to the upcoming Stated Meeting.

5-4.c. The Church Care Committee shall examine the records in accordance with **BCO** Chapter 40 and shall classify exceptions as notations, exceptions of form or exceptions of substance. The Committee will consult the RAO guidelines on examining Presbytery minutes in defining these

terms. Exceptions of substance should be limited to serious irregularities, gross errors, corrupt practices and heretical opinions.

5-4.d. Notations and exceptions of form shall normally be sent to the Clerk of Session by the Committee without being read before Presbytery or recorded in its minutes. Exceptions of substance shall be reported to Presbytery as recommendations to be voted upon. The Sessional Records shall be approved without exception; or with exception of form and/or substance.

5-4.e. Sessions shall advise the Presbytery by the following Stated Meeting through the Church Care Committee that they have disposed of the exception of substance in one of the following manners: the Session agrees with the exception of substance, corrects its record or action if possible, and promises to try to be more careful in the future; or, the Session respectfully disagrees with the exception of substance, states its grounds and refers the exception back to the Presbytery for action. The Church Care Committee will bring a recommendation regarding accepting the disposition as satisfactory.

5-4.f. The Church Care Committee shall report to Presbytery regarding any Sessional Records that have not been submitted for review in the past year.

5-4.g. The Church Care Committee shall provide help for any Clerk of Session seeking guidance in preparing Sessional Records for the yearly Presbytery review.

5-5. Commissions

5-5.a. All commissions appointed by Covenant Presbytery will have a quorum of two Teaching Elders and two Ruling Elders unless otherwise specified by Presbytery.

6. Government

6-1. Rules of Order

The rules of parliamentary order shall be the Standing Rules of Covenant Presbytery here-in-after provided, the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America, and Robert's Rules of Order - Revised.

6-2. Standing Rules of Presbytery

6-2.a. The Standing Rules shall be printed in the minutes of Presbytery once a year. Suspension of the Standing Rules shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Presbytery and shall apply only to a particular action in the same meeting in which suspension takes place.

6-2.b. Amendments to the Standing Rules shall be proposed in writing at one meeting, admitted to the docket of the next Stated Meeting, and become effective by a majority vote of Presbytery.

7. General Policies

7-1. Expenses

7-1.a. Presbytery committee and commission expenses shall be paid by the Treasurer when approved in writing by the chairman of the committee or commission.

7-1.b. Presbytery shall set the rate for automobile travel expense at the October Stated Meeting.

7-2. Obligations of Teaching Elders

MINISTERIAL OBLIGATION

Believing the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice; and
 Sincerely receiving and adopting the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and further promising that if at any time I find myself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, I will on my own initiative, make known to my Presbytery the change which has taken place in my views since the assumption of my ordination vows; and
 Approving of the form of government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in America as being in conformity with the general principles of Biblical polity; and
 Promising subjection to my brethren in the Lord; and
 Having been induced, as far as I know my own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote His glory in the Gospel of His Son; and
 Promising to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto me on that account; and
 Engaging to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all my duties as a Christian and a minister of the Gospel, whether personal or relational, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in my manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the flock of which God shall make me overseer;
 Therefore I, _____, do sincerely receive and subscribe to the above obligation as a just and true exhibition of my faith and principles, and do resolve and promise to exercise my ministry in conformity therewith.

**Appendix - Powers of Commission Entrusted
and Guidance Given to Committees
(Taken from Committee Manuals and Presbytery Minutes)**

NOTE: The Appendix is not part of the Standing Rules.

1. The Administration Committee

- DUTIES 6. Presbytery grants the Administration Committee the power of a commission to find a complaint in order and to hear the complaint in accordance with *BCO* 43-8 provided both the party complaining and the party complained against are agreeable to this.

2. The Church Care Committee

- III.B.5. Any minister or congregation desiring to dissolve a pastoral relationship shall appear personally (in the case of a minister) or send representatives (in the case of a congregation) before the Committee and then before Presbytery, unless this be waived by the Committee and/or Presbytery. The Committee may act on behalf of Presbytery in dismissing a TE to another presbytery or denomination when both parties to his call concur in the dissolution of an existing relationship.
- III.B.7. The Committee may act on behalf of Presbytery in the dissolution of a pastoral relationship when the church and the pastor concur in their request to Presbytery, and there is a proper call to another church.
- III.B.8. The Committee may act for Presbytery to grant permission to a minister who is a member of Covenant Presbytery, to move to another field within the Presbytery, in the case of a new call, with the understanding that the call must still be approved by Presbytery.

3. The Credentials Committee

- III.B.1. Ordained ministers from another PCA Presbytery: They ordinarily may not move on to the field without the permission of Presbytery (*BCO* 21-1). The Committee has the power of a commission to grant exceptions to this rule but only after having examined a man on his views in committee and only by a vote of those present in a properly called committee meeting with a quorum present. Any who move on to the field under this provision must understand that their examination must still be sustained by Presbytery and their call must still be approved by Presbytery.
- III.C.1. Candidates licensed to preach in Covenant Presbytery: The Committee may act as a commission to grant permission to a current licentiate in Covenant Presbytery to move on to the field and to function as a student supply until the next Stated Meeting of Presbytery. The Committee may do this only by a vote of those present in a properly called committee meeting with a quorum present. Any who move on to the field under this provision must understand that their examination must still be sustained by Presbytery and their call must still be approved by Presbytery.
- 91st Stated Meeting (02/06/01); see 91-21 Presbytery adopted the opinion on creation adopted by the 28th General Assembly, as Covenant Presbytery's position on creation, which reads as follows:

"Since historically in Reformed theology there has been a diversity of views of the creation days among highly respected theologians, and, since the PCA has from its inception allowed a diversity, that the Assembly affirm that such diversity as covered in this report [the final report of the General Assembly's Advisory Committee on Creation] is acceptable as long as the full historicity of the creation account is accepted."

4. The MNA Committee

- 76th Stated Meeting (02/13/96); see 76-13.5 - 76-13.8. Presbytery set up an MNA church planting fund to receive donations for the purpose of church planting in Covenant Presbytery and

allow the MNA Committee to act as a commission, with a required quorum of two teaching elders and two ruling elders, in managing the fund with oversight by Covenant Presbytery; the presbytery treasurer was given authority to disburse the funds as directed by the commission. The intent is to prevent the "zeroing out" of the funds at the end of the fiscal year designated specifically for church planting as would be done in the case of a normal budgeted item. The establishment of a fund specifically for gifts designated for church planting would mean that this fund would not be treated as a normal budget item so that any monies remaining in the fund at the end of the year would be carried over into the succeeding year.

- 77th Stated Meeting (05/28/96); see 77-25.9. Presbytery approved a policy whereby the MNA Committee yearly brings a recommendation to the February stated meeting of presbytery as to how much of the remaining monies in the church planting account of Covenant Presbytery from the previous fiscal year is to be rolled over to the MNA Church Planting Fund.
- 79th Stated Meeting (02/04/97); see 79-19.5. The committee recommended that Covenant Presbytery answer the Presbytery treasurer's question regarding disbursement of monies in the Presbytery MNA Church Planting Fund by adopting the following interpretation of the language in paragraphs 76-13.5 - 76-13.8 of the Presbytery minutes: The Presbytery treasurer is to disburse funds to each specific project as requested by the commission, and the commission is to present a commission report (*BCO* 15-1&2) of the disbursement to presbytery for its approval. The recommendation was approved.
- 85th Stated Meeting (02/02/99); see 85-13.2 The Administration Committee will evaluate the carryover funds requests made by the MNA Committee in February of each year using the following guideline in consultation with the presbytery treasurer:

The percentage of the MNA actual church planting expenditures plus carryover request relative to the MNA budget, will not normally exceed the percentage of the overall presbytery budget actually achieved.

Example: If presbytery budget is \$100,000 and actual collection is \$80,000 (80% of budget) this percentage would be applied to the MNA budget. If the MNA budget was \$10,000 and only \$5,000 was spent, then the committee would normally not recommend that the carryover request be in excess of \$3,000, making the expended and carryover funds equal to the percentage of the presbytery budget actually achieved.

- 86th Stated Meeting (05/25/99); see 86-12.2 The motion was made, seconded, and passed that Presbytery instruct its treasurer not to include in his report money that has been put into the MNA Church Planting Fund (as is already done with the money put into Presbytery's Disaster Fund); that once Presbytery, through its MNA commission (see 76-13.6) or by passage of a recommendation or motion, designates Church Planting Fund money to a church planting project, that money is removed from the Church Planting Fund and will be reported on the treasurer's report with the monies designated for that particular project.

5. The Nominating Committee

- III.C. The Presbytery grants to the Nominating Committee the power of a commission to fill any General Assembly Committee of Commissioner Positions not filled after the March Stated Meeting of Presbytery.
- III.D. The Presbytery grants to the Nominating Committee the power of a commission to fill any Presbytery Nominations to the General Assembly Permanent Committees not filled after the October Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

**Appendix - Presbytery Policy
on the Distribution of Minutes**

See 80-11.3 and 86-12.6.

NOTE: The Appendix is not part of the Standing Rules.

1. The approved minutes of Covenant Presbytery are a public record. A copy will be mailed to anyone who asks for one with the exception of executive session minutes.
2. Executive session minutes will be sent to the GA Committee on Review of Presbytery Records. The minutes of an executive session will be shown or read to any member of presbytery who was present at the executive session and who makes this request of the presbytery stated clerk. Any other request for access to executive session minutes will be referred to the Administration Committee.
3. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly may be included on the mailing list to receive copies of the unapproved minutes to provide him with a timely report of presbytery's actions.
4. Unapproved minutes may be sent to someone such as another stated clerk who is interested only in gleaning ideas on how to publish minutes.
5. Appendices normally will not be mailed out with the minutes. The appendix may include items such as committee reports, treasurer's reports, and details of calls. Details of a call will be sent to anyone in Covenant Presbytery who requests to see them. Requests for the details of a call from anyone outside of Covenant Presbytery will be referred to the Administration Committee.

**Appendix - Presbytery Policy
on the Distribution of
Scholarship Fund
See 86-12.8.**

NOTE: The Appendix is not part of the Standing Rules.

The Covenant Presbytery Scholarship Fund is a privately endowed fund for the children of teaching elders of Covenant Presbytery to attend the college of their choice. The award will be for one thousand dollars annually. The Administration Committee recommends the following standard stipulations for the award.

- (1) It will be given in its entirety to one child each year.
- (2) It will be voted upon at the May meeting of the Administration Committee.
- (3) Members of the committee must excuse themselves from evaluating their own children.
- (4) The award will be non repeatable.
- (5) The applicant must have more than \$1000 of unfunded cost in the Fall semester.
- (6) The applicants must fill out a form supplied by the Administration Committee and have it in their hands by April 30 before the Fall of the desired award.
- (7) The applicants who qualify according to #5 and #6 above will be rated by the committee on the basis of the following:
 - (a) Availability for the award (upperclassmen would be favored)
 - (b) Academic achievement in high school and/or thus far in college (qca + act)
 - (c) Need, based on a simple form application

Should Pastors Opt-Out of Social Security?

Opting out of Social Security is a significant decision. By filing IRS Form 4361, pastors can cite theological objections to opt out. However, this decision, which must be made within two years of ordination, is permanent. Given the far reaching significance of this choice, we talked with the Financial Planning Advisors of Geneva Benefits Group for their insights.

Geneva's Experience in Ministry and Financial Wellness

Do you regularly work with ministers who have opted out of Social Security?

Yes, many of our participants have opted out, but often regret it. Most did so on advice from older peers. Compensating for lost Social Security benefits is difficult and gets harder with age.

Keeping 15.3% more of your paycheck is appealing, especially with modest ministry wages. However, Social Security offers significant retirement support, including income and access to Medicare.

The Reason Behind Opting Out

Ministers have the ability to opt out of Social Security. What is the reason for this?

A thorough explanation would require considerable detail, but a brief historical overview is beneficial. The Social Security Act was enacted in 1935, and the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) was established to fund it, with costs shared between employers and employees.

Clergy, along with certain other groups, were classified as “self-employed” and initially excluded from the Social Security system. In the 1950s, there was an intention to include these groups, leading Congress to pass the Self-Employment Contributions Act (SECA). This explains why ministers who remain in Social Security must pay both the employer and employee portions of Social Security, and why churches are not permitted to contribute directly to Social Security on behalf of their ministers. Consequently, ministers have a “dual tax” status. They are considered W-2 employees of the church for federal and state income tax purposes while being treated as self-employed for Social Security and Medicare tax purposes (with SECA tax paid on both salary and housing).

When SECA was first established, clergy were required to opt in to participate. However, this proved difficult, and eventually, the “opt in” window became an “opt out” window. Therefore, what began as an effort to improve retirement security for clergy has led to confusion.

Reasons for Opting Out of Social Security

Individuals often choose to opt out for two primary reasons: 1) the concern that Social Security may be insolvent by the time they retire; and/or 2) the belief that by saving and effectively investing these tax dollars, they could secure more income during retirement than Social Security would provide.

However, it is important to note that the IRS allows pastors to opt out of Social Security for only one specific reason. A pastor can opt out if they can truthfully affirm the following:

“I am conscientiously opposed to, or because of my religious principles I am opposed to, *the acceptance of* any public insurance that makes payments in the event of death, disability, old age, or retirement; or that makes payments towards the cost of, or provides services for, medical care” (IRS Form 4361; italics and underline added).

For ministers whose consciences are bound by Scripture, opting out of Social Security necessitates a biblical belief that ministers should not accept or receive public insurance benefits for retirement, disability, or healthcare. Ministers must swear or certify that they are opting out solely for this reason. Furthermore, they must certify that they have already made this view known to their Presbytery (or ordaining body).

Simply stated, a minister must believe that Scripture teaches it would be inappropriate for him to receive Social Security, Medicare, or any other public insurance benefits.

While various arguments have been presented over the years, our stance aligns with almost every major Protestant denomination in the United States. We remain unconvinced by any exegetical or theological rationale that supports the idea that ministers should be opposed to receiving Social Security or Medicare benefits, at least one consistent with the belief certification required on IRS Form 4361. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that some individuals genuinely believe they must opt out of Social Security for scriptural reasons.

Addressing Common Concerns

What do you tell pastors when they say, “Social Security is going to be insolvent by the time I hit retirement age”?

Although there are frequent discussions about Social Security's potential insolvency, the consensus within the financial community is that Social Security will continue to support American retirees for many years. Adjustments to its administration and funding have occurred in the past, and similar changes to the retirement age, tax rates, cost-of-living adjustments, means testing, etc., are likely to be made in the future.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, without Social Security, forty percent of senior citizens would experience poverty. Many retired pastors who opted out of Social Security face substantial financial difficulties, and most widows seeking assistance were married to men who opted out of Social Security.

The argument that "Social Security will be gone" has been around since at least the 1970s. Many currently retired pastors encountered this argument when they were first ordained, and those who followed it often regret their decision.

Therefore, there are several reasons to believe Social Security will persist.

(It is vital to note that ministers cannot legitimately sign IRS Form 4361 based on this reason. By signing the form, a minister is 'certifying' opposition to receiving the benefits, not merely avoiding the tax or expressing doubt about the program's longevity.)

How about when pastors say, "I can invest my money better than the government can"?

The IRS Form 4361 does not permit financial concerns as a reason for opting out of Social Security. As attorney and CPA Richard Hammar states, opposition must be rooted in religious beliefs.

Social Security is an insurance program, not an investment. To replace it financially, one would need to:

- Invest to cover a potential 20-30+ year income gap left by the absence of Social Security benefits, including benefits to a spouse.
- Save enough to replace benefits for minor children or obtain sufficient disability and life insurance policies.
- Pay monthly Medicare Part A premiums, currently \$518/month per spouse, totaling \$12,432/year plus inflation adjustments, requiring an additional \$300,000+/- on day one of retirement.
- Ensure protection against death or divorce, likely involving more savings and insurance premiums.

Even considering finances (which is legally impermissible), it remains unwise to opt-out of Social Security. Private healthcare insurance for retirees would be prohibitively expensive, so purchasing Medicare Part A coverage is essential.

So, their personal investments would have to perform exceptionally well, right?

Yes, but it's risky. Market investments can be volatile, unlike Social Security which is stable. Social Security offers a guaranteed income stream, complementing market-based investments. Combining Social Security with retirement plans provides both fixed income and potential market gains. We believe a balanced strategy using both Social Security and retirement accounts like a 403(b)(9) is best for funding retirement. If these sources are insufficient, other strategies can be explored.

Potential Legal Ramifications

Are there any other potential legal ramifications?

Yes. Opting out can only be done for specific reasons, otherwise there are several issues to be aware of. According to Richard Hammar, "Ministers can opt out of Social Security only if they meet strict religious-based criteria. Missteps can lead to significant penalties." Those "who opt out of Social Security without meeting the legal criteria may face IRS audits. For example, in the 1995 case *Hairston v. Commissioner*, the Tax Court revoked a minister's exemption after determining that his opposition was not based on religious principles. The court ruled that the minister's trial testimony conflicted with his application on Form 4361."

Additionally, according to Hammar, there are other financial consequences, "including penalties for non-compliance, back taxes and accrued interest, (and) potential legal disputes and reputational harm ... Simply signing and submitting Form 4361 does not guarantee exemption. The IRS and courts may later question the validity of the minister's religious opposition." Therefore, there can be other potential legal as well as financial ramifications.

More Questions?

Geneva Benefits Group is an agency of the PCA and serves those who serve others, providing practical support for the financial, physical, and mental wellbeing of people who work in full-time ministry. To contact Geneva, visit genevabenefits.org

Understanding Directors and Officers (D&O) Liability Insurance

The Stated Clerk's Office strongly advises presbyteries and churches to purchase and maintain D&O Insurance;

Directors and Officers (D&O) Liability Insurance is a critical tool for organizations and individuals in leadership roles, providing a dual benefit by protecting both parties from potential financial losses stemming from lawsuits related to decisions and actions taken in their official capacities.

What is Directors and Officers (D&O) Liability Insurance?

Directors and Officers (D&O) Liability Insurance offers coverage to protect:

1. **Individuals:** Shields directors and officers from personal losses and liabilities if they are sued for decisions or actions made within the scope of their duties.
2. **Organizations:** Protects organizations from out-of-pocket expenses related to lawsuits against their leadership.

Key Features:

- **Personal Asset Protection:** Safeguards the personal assets of directors and officers.
- **Legal Expense Coverage:** Covers legal fees, including court costs and attorney fees, arising from lawsuits.
- **Organizational Coverage:** Extends protection to the organization in some cases, ensuring financial stability.

D&O insurance shares similarities with professional liability or errors and omissions (E&O) insurance for professionals like doctors, lawyers, and financial advisors. It offers peace of mind to those in decision-making positions, allowing them to focus on their roles without the constant fear of personal financial risk.

What Does Directors and Officers (D&O) Liability Insurance Cover?

While the specifics of D&O coverage depend on the policy terms, exclusions, and limits, it generally includes:

1. **Legal Fees:** Covers court costs, attorney fees, and, in some cases, derivative suits.
2. **Settlement Costs:** Pays for out-of-court settlements or court-ordered judgments.
3. **Damages:** Addresses financial liabilities resulting from wrongful decisions or actions by directors and officers.
4. **Personal Asset Protection:** Safeguards the personal assets of directors, officers, and employees against covered claims.

5. **Entity Coverage:** In some cases, protects the organization itself from liabilities related to claims against leadership.
-

What Doesn't Directors and Officers (D&O) Liability Insurance Cover?

D&O insurance has specific exclusions. Common exclusions include:

- **Fraud:** Claims involving intentional fraud or dishonesty.
- **Willful Negligence:** Acts of gross negligence or willful misconduct.
- **Criminal Activity:** Illegal activities or criminal behavior.
- **Policy-Specific Exclusions:** Other exclusions explicitly outlined in the policy which may vary by insurance company.

Understanding these exclusions is crucial to ensure your organization and leadership have adequate protection.

Types of Directors and Officers (D&O) Liability Insurance

D&O policies typically include three main coverage types, often referred to as Side A, Side B, and Side C:

1. **Side A Coverage:**
 - Protects individual directors and officers if the organization cannot or is not required to indemnify them for losses, such as when the organization is insolvent.
 - Ensures personal financial security for individuals in leadership roles.
 2. **Side B Coverage:**
 - Reimburses the organization when it indemnifies directors and officers for defense costs, settlements, or judgments.
 - Helps manage the financial impact on the organization.
 3. **Side C Coverage (Entity Coverage):**
 - Covers the organization itself for claims arising from its own wrongful acts.
 - Important for lawsuits that name both the company and its directors or officers.
-

Conclusion

Consult with an experienced insurance broker to design a policy that aligns with your organization's structure, risk exposure, and governance needs. Understanding the coverage details, exclusions, and types of protection ensures your organization and its leaders are adequately protected.



GUIDE TO THE PASTOR SEARCH PROCESS

The PCA Stated Clerk's Office provides an information distribution service for the benefit of churches and pastors. We are not a full-service placement office, nor can we guarantee a call if our information service is used. We frequently are not kept informed on the status of search processes. If you know of a church or individual who desires to make use of this service, or if you have questions or need assistance, please visit our website, www.pcaac.org, or contact the Stated Clerk's Office at pastorsearch@pcanet.org or 678-825-1000. To give you an overview of the service:

- Churches with vacant pulpits may file a Church Profile Form (CPF) with the Stated Clerk's Office and receive information on candidates who match that profile.
- A Ministry Opportunities List is updated regularly on our website: www.pcaac.org. The Ministry Opportunities List catalogs pulpits and staff positions open in the PCA. Churches may opt whether or not to be included on this list, so it is not necessarily a comprehensive list.
- A packet of information is available to give pulpit committees guidelines and other helpful information for their task.
- Pastors, as well, may complete a Ministerial Data Form (MDF) to place on file with the Stated Clerk's Office. It may, at the candidate's request, be filed actively or inactive, and may be sent to any church or just to select churches. Forms are kept active for 18 months, and then made inactive unless the candidate gives further instructions.
- Pastors from other denominations occasionally request our service. We do keep MDFs on file for those pastors; however, they are given last priority when distributing information.
- The Church Profile Form, the Ministerial Data Form, and the Ministry Opportunities List are available by contacting pastorsearch@pcanet.org.
- We also keep a list of experienced teaching elders who have indicated an interest in serving as an interim pastor. If this would be of interest to your church, please contact pastorsearch@pcanet.org.
- As you move through the pastoral search process, if you run into difficult questions or just need good outside advice, we have men of experience and wise counsel to whom we can direct you.



PREPARING FOR LICENSURE AND ORDINATION EXAMS

For a copy of the Syllabus/Study Guide written by
Bryan Chapell and Jim Meek, contact:

PCA Bookstore
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 102
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30043-8143

Email: bookstore@pcanet.org
Phone: 1-800-283-1357
Web: www.pcabookstore.com



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

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 Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8122
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ac@pcanet.org

TO: Clerk of Session

FROM: L. Roy Taylor

DATE: February 10, 2005

SUBJECT: Merger of Church A and Church B

BCO 13-9 f. gives Presbytery the authority to “unite churches.” There are no specific procedures for doing so delineated in the BCO, however.

The merger of churches is both an ecclesiastical transaction and a legal or civil transaction, since there are corporate, financial and property issues involved. I believe *it is imperative that both churches secure legal counsel to help them deal with legal and corporate matters*. Each church is an ecclesiastical entity recognized by the Presbytery and a civil entity recognized by the State as an unincorporated religious society or as an incorporated church. I hope both churches are incorporated.

The simplest process would be for the Church A members to join Church B. But, before doing so you would need to have congregational action to deal with the sale of the Church A building and the distribution of the proceeds of the sale, the distribution or sale of the real and personal property of the church, and the continuance, succession, or eventual termination of the church corporation.

As I understand it, however, you all are planning a merger rather than the Church A members joining Church B *en masse*.

In answer to your questions, whether or not you have to apply for a new charter with the Secretary of State's Office is a legal matter. You should contact an attorney for advice on that matter.

I do not know if you will need a new Federal Tax ID number or not. I assume you could use the Church B number and just inform the IRS of a change in church name. An attorney or the IRS could give a more definitive answer.

BCO 16-2 states, “The government of the Church is by officers gifted to represent Christ, and the right of God's people to recognize by election to office those so gifted is inalienable. Therefore no man can be placed over a church in any office without the election, or *at least the consent of that church*” [emphasis added]. BCO Preliminary Principle 6 states, “. . . the power to elect persons to the exercise of authority in any particular society resides in that society.” That principle applies to the pastors, associate

pastors, ruling elders and deacons. If the intention is that all the officers of both churches become officers in the united church there are two ways to accomplish that.

1. If the Church A members join Church B *en masse*, the Church A officers could be elected as officers at Church B following the usual process (BCO 24), or
2. If you were taking the merger route, both congregations would need to vote on a resolution (prior to the merger) to accept the ruling elders and deacons as officers of the united church.

If the churches are incorporated, again there are two possibilities on the matter of Trustees.

1. If the Church A members join Church B *en masse*, the Church A trustees could be elected as trustees at Church B following the usual process (BCO 25-7), or
2. If you were taking the merger route, both congregations would need to vote on a resolution (prior to the merger) to accept the trustees of both churches as trustees of the united church.

The matter of trustees is a legal matter that requires the advice of an attorney.

On the membership matter, again there are two possibilities.

1. If the Church A members join Church B *en masse*, then both the communicant and non-communicant members would become members of Church B. The communicant members would need to appear personally before the Church B session and request to be received by transfer. They would *not* join merely by sending a list of members from the Church A session to Church B session. (We had an instance last year in which a session received about one hundred members as a group by transfer, and the presbytery ruled that such a procedure was improper, on the ground that persons transferring membership must appear individually before the session). Church A members, who did not want to join Church B could transfer to other churches.
2. If you were taking the merger route, both congregations and both sessions would need to vote on a resolution (prior to the merger) to accept the members of both churches as members of the united church. Church A members, who did not want to become members of the united church, could transfer to other churches.

How to handle the proceeds of the sale of the Church A building would be a matter for the congregation to decide. I think it would be wise to have a resolution passed by the congregation that would either

1. Stipulate in detail how the proceeds are dispersed (for example, \$x as a retirement gift to the sexton, \$y to Mrs. B. I. Anderson as a retirement stipend, \$z to MTW for the support of specified missionaries and, if you are so inclined, the remainder to the newly merged church), or
2. Stipulate that the session be authorized by the congregation to disperse the proceeds as the session deems appropriate.

With regard to the other property of the church (furniture, furnishings, etc.) BCO 9-2 states regarding the deacons of a church,

They shall have the care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. *In matters of special importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without the approval of the Session and consent of the congregation* [emphasis added]. In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session.

I believe it would be wise to have the congregation approve a resolution to authorize the session to approve the diaconate's distribution or sale of the furniture, furnishings, equipment, real and personal property of the church. In that way some of items may be given away to members with sentimental attachment to certain items, some things could be sold, and others given away to appropriate recipients.

If someone has contributed tax-deductible funds to the church for a specified item (furniture for the ladies parlor or a \$10,000 piano for the sanctuary, for example) or contributed a tax-deductible specified item (such as a \$10,000 piano), those items are the property of the church, not the donor. If the church decided to return tax-deductible funds or items, the church should issue a 1099 Miscellaneous Income Form to the recipient, who would then have to declare that as income for income tax purposes. People should be aware that the IRS discourages the return of tax-deductible funds and items, and that such return may trigger an audit. This is another item on which legal counsel is advisable.

With regard to the role of the ministers of the two churches, I assume that one minister would become the pastor of the united church and one would become an assistant or associate pastor of the united church. I see four possible ways of handling it.

1. If the Church A members join Church B *en masse*, the pastor of Church A could resign (following the specified procedures in the BCO) and the session of Church B could call him as an assistant pastor.
2. If the Church A members join Church B *en masse*, the pastor of Church A could resign (following the specified procedures in the BCO) and the congregation of Church B could call him as an associate pastor.
3. If you were taking the merger route, both congregations would need to vote on a resolution (prior to the merger) to accept the ruling elders and deacons as officers of the united church and the session of the united church could call the pastor of Church A as an assistant pastor at the united church.
4. If you were taking the merger route, both congregations would need to vote on a resolution (prior to the merger) to accept the ruling elders and deacons as officers of the united church and both congregations could vote on a resolution accepting Pastor B as the pastor and Pastor A as the associate pastor of the united church.

If the merger does not go through, and the congregation votes to sell the Church A property, the session could make the decision on renting facilities for worship. In the event the purchase of another facility for worship presents itself, the congregation would vote on the purchase of new property.

If the sale of the Church A property is approved and the members transfer to Church B, or the two churches are merged, I think it would be wise to continue the Church A Corporation for a time to receive any bequests, or to specify that the Church B or the united church be the successor corporation. This is another matter on which you will need legal counsel. This item should also be included in your final congregational meeting in the form of a resolution to be enacted.

In summary, whether or not the merger goes through and you sell the Church A building, you would have a congregational meeting for the congregation to vote on appropriately prepared resolutions (after securing legal counsel) to

1. Authorize the Trustees to sell the building.
2. Specify how the proceeds of the sale are to be distributed and who is to make the distribution (trustees or session).
3. Authorize the session to approve the diaconate's distribution or sale of the furniture, furnishings, equipment, real and personal property of the church.
4. Specify a plan for the continuance, succession, or eventual termination of the corporation.
5. Petition presbytery to dissolve the church, if that is the intention of the congregation. If you were going to continue as a church in another location, then you would not have a resolution requesting dissolution.

If the intention is for the two churches to merge, Church A would still have a congregational meeting to vote as stated above but, additionally, both Church A and Church B congregations would need to vote on appropriately prepared resolutions (after securing legal counsel) to

1. Accept the ruling elders and deacons as officers of the united church.
2. Accept the ministers of both churches as ministers of the united church, specifying who would be the pastor and who would be the associate pastor.
3. Accept the trustees of both churches as trustees of the united church.
4. Stipulate a procedure for the corporation of the united church to become the corporation in succession to the corporations of the two churches.

I note from the last annual report from Church A (2001) that you had 588 members listed. I note from your fax, that there were forty-three members present and voting at a recent congregational meeting. Therefore, I suggest that the session update the accuracy of the church membership roll, following BCO 38-4, before having your final congregational meeting. I note also that Church A has more officers than Church B, but Church B has a larger attendance. Merging the sessions with the former Church A elders becoming the instant majority would probably be unacceptable to Church B.

I trust this advice is helpful. *I emphasize again that you should secure legal counsel in order to proceed appropriately in accordance with Mississippi law.*

Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, “The Rules of Assembly Operation,” “The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission,” and/or *Robert’s Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA or staff members of the Office of the Stated Clerk are for information only and are not authoritative rulings that may only be made by the courts of the Church. Responses to inquiries are based on information supplied by the inquirer, which may not necessarily be comprehensive. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not represent parties in ecclesiastical judicial cases. Parties to potential cases or cases in process are responsible for their own constitutional and procedural knowledge and understanding. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not give legal advice. When legal advice is needed, professional legal counsel should be secured from one familiar with applicable laws and regulations.



GUIDE TO THE PCA STATED CLERK'S OFFICE

This information helps you know who to contact at the Stated Clerk's Office when you have a question or need help. You are also welcome to call the main number, 678-825-1000, or send an email to ac@pcanet.org, and your communication will be forwarded to the appropriate person. However, if you want to make a direct contact, please use the directory below.

Regarding	Contact
Address Changes -- Individuals or Organizations	Monica Johnston- records@pcanet.org
BCO Questions	Per Almquist – palmquist@pcanet.org
BCO Votes	Per Almquist – palmquist@pcanet.org
ByFaith Magazine	Andy Jones – ajones@byfaithonline.com
Certification Cards	Alyssa Cho – acho@pcanet.org
Clerks Handbook	Heidi Harrison - hharrison@pcanet.org
Committees of Commissioners	Heidi Harrison - hharrison@pcanet.org
Compensation Surveys	Erika Derr – ederr@pcanet.org
D&O Insurance	Anna Eubanks – aeubanks@pcanet.org
EIN or Tax ID numbers	Erika Derr – ederr@pcanet.org
Exhibitors at GA	Ashley Davis – events@pcanet.org
General Assembly Meeting Planning	Angela Nantz – anantz@pcanet.org
Incorporation Information	Erika Derr – ederr@pcanet.org
Nominating Committee/GA Nominations, Appointments	Heidi Harrison - hharrison@pcanet.org
Overtures and Publications	Per Almquist – palmquist@pcanet.org
Pastor Search/Vacant Pulpits	Alyssa Cho – acho@pcanet.org
Pastoral Changes	Monica Johnston- records@pcanet.org
Presbytery Boundaries and Meetings	Per Almquist – palmquist@pcanet.org
Presbytery Minutes and Exception Responses	Alyssa Cho – acho@pcanet.org
Presbytery Rolls	Monica Johnston- records@pcanet.org
Review of Presbytery Records (RPR)	Alyssa Cho – acho@pcanet.org
Salary Studies	Erika Derr – ederr@pcanet.org
Standing Judicial Commission (SJC)	Margaret Baker – mbaker@pcanet.org
Statistical Forms for Churches	Erika Derr – ederr@pcanet.org
Verification or Letter of Good Standing	Erika Derr – ederr@pcanet.org
Website for AC and GA	Ashley Davis – adavis@pcanet.org

COMMON QUESTIONS FROM STATED CLERKS

Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, “The Rules of Assembly Operation,” “The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission,” and/or *Roberts Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America are of an advisory nature and are not authoritative rulings that may only be rendered by the courts of the Church.

1. What does a presbytery do when a church does not submit minutes for review, as the BCO requires?

A presbytery may assign the case to a Shepherding or Minister’s Oversight Committee. This committee can visit and discuss the importance of the minutes with the session of the delinquent church. If this step is taken without result, additional formal action should be initiated through the presbytery; such action could lead to severing connection with the church.

2. For what period of time does an elder hold office?

The office of elder is perpetual; that is, one holds the office for life unless removed from office through discipline or the elder demits. The BCO allows the church to determine the rotation or non-rotation of service.

Most of BCO 24 addresses the matter of service. If a man who has been elected an elder goes on “inactive” status he remains an elder, but is not active on the session. To return to active service he must be elected and installed again. While he is inactive he may be called on to serve on committees of the courts (24-9). The references to an official relationship with the session are to service and not to the office per se (24-6, 8).

3. Are officers permitted to vote before they are installed?

BCO 24-7 implies that installation is the official beginning of service for officers. Just as a teaching elder is not officially the pastor of a church until installed, so a ruling elder or deacon does not function officially until installation. If a session or diaconate desires to use the services of men elected to office but not yet installed, they may do so, but until they are installed, they cannot vote.

4. Is the presbytery required to approve any amendments to a pastor’s “terms of call?”

The 11th GA (M11GA, p.101, item 55) adopted the following advice from the Judicial Business Committee: “BCO 20-1 indicates that a presbytery must approve the call of a pastor. The call establishes the relationship of the pastor to the calling body. The BCO is silent concerning amending the call; however, in as much as the initial relationship must be approved by presbytery, it would follow that if any changes are made in the original call, the presbytery would necessarily have to approve the changes in the call for the protection of both the pastor and the calling body.”

The 21st GA adopted an overture to require that “any amendment to the terms of the call must be reported to and approved by the presbytery when amended.” The action was sent down to the presbyteries for advice and consent (M21GA, II, 17, p.139) and the amendment failed to receive the two-thirds vote of consent from the presbyteries (M22GA, p. 55, item 3). However, many presbyteries have included in their Bylaws the requirement for reporting to the presbytery any changes to “terms of call.”

5. *What is the proper use of the “extraordinary clause?”*

The 9th GA (M9GA 9-65, III, E, p.122) responded to this question: “The General Assembly recognizes that the use of the extraordinary clause is left to the discretion of an individual presbytery subject to review of the General Assembly and to the process provided for in the complaint. The General Assembly declares that the use of the extraordinary clause should be limited to extraordinary circumstances of the church or proven extraordinary gifts of the man. The Assembly would take notice, however, that there has been an increasing laxity in the application of the clause. The Assembly would, therefore, counsel that presbyteries exercise diligence and care in the use of this provision in order that they not prevent the ordination of a candidate for whom there are truly exceptional circumstances nor ordain a person who is inadequately prepared for the ministry.”

6. *Can a presbytery require a congregation to hold a congregational meeting (BCO 13-9)?*

If there is a functioning session the answer is no. However, the presbytery can request (but not mandate) that the congregation hold a congregational meeting. If there is no functioning session and a committee serves as a session, the answer is yes, according to BCO 13-9.

7. *In what circumstances can a presbytery dissolve a church or a church session?*

There have been two SJC cases on the matter of dissolving a session:

In Case 90-4, The Judgment read:

“2. The BCO does not give a presbytery the authority and power to suspend members of a session without the consent of the congregation and without due process.”

In Case 91-2, The Judgment read:

“1. The *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America does not give a presbytery constitutional authority and power to suspend, either temporarily or permanently, the session of a local church without the consent of the congregation and without due process... the presbytery did not have constitutional authority or power to suspend the session

2. Because the presbytery does not have the constitutional authority or power to replace, suspend or act as a session pro tem for a session of a church without the prior formal consent of the congregation of that church, the presbytery correctly determined that it did not have constitutional authority and power to constitute itself, or its commission, to act at any time as a session pro tem for the church.”

There is no provision made in the BCO for a presbytery directly or through a commission to dissolve a session without due process (BCO 24-6; 33-1). If a session is unable to function [for example, they do not have two elders] (BCO 12-1), then the presbytery may assume original jurisdiction. “In cases in which the session cannot exercise its authority, it [presbytery] shall have the power to assume original jurisdiction” (BCO 13-9). As to the dissolution of a church, according to BCO 13-9.f, 13-10, the presbytery, at the request of the members, can dissolve a church.

8. *Are ruling elders allowed to administer the sacraments?*

The General Assembly considered the issue of whether ruling elders could administer the sacraments early in the history of the PCA when we had a shortage of ministers, which we do not now have. The Assembly studied the issue from 1973-1977 and finally came down on the historic majority opinion that only ministers may administer the sacraments. “Recommendation 8: That the General Assembly affirm that in keeping with the

confessional standards of the church, only properly ordained teaching elders may administer the sacraments” (M7GA, p. 84 [WCF 27-4, WLC 176]). There were majority and minority reports.

9. *What role does Robert’s Rules of Order play in our parliamentary authority?*

The General Assembly, presbyteries and sessions have the following hierarchy of parliamentary authorities: (1) the PCA Constitution (*Westminster Standards, BCO*), (2) Standing Rules (in the case of the Assembly, the “Rules of Assembly Operation”), and (3) *Robert’s Rules of Order*. The Constitution is the primary authority, the Standing Rules are the secondary authority, and *RRO* is the tertiary authority. It is nowhere stated that *RRO* supersedes the Constitution.

10. *When does a church member have access to a session’s minutes?*

References to church members’ access to minutes are in *BCO* 10-4 and 12-7, and yet neither of those references settles the issue of whether a church member may have access to session minutes, other than to extract from the minutes “whenever properly required” (*BCO* 10-4). A session may adopt a standing rule that supersedes and is different from *RRO*, but not contrary to the *BCO*. If the standing rules of a session do not address the issue, then *Robert’s Rules of Order*, Chapter XV, Section 47, page 444, Tenth Edition, should be consulted: “Any member [of a society] has a right to examine the minutes of the society at a reasonable time and place, but this privilege must not be abused to the annoyance of the secretary. The same principle applies to the minutes of the boards and committees, their records being accessible to members of the boards and committees but to no other.” If a person is denied an “extract” of the session minutes by the session, under (*BCO* 10-4), a complaint could be taken to presbytery and if denied by presbytery, could be filed with the Standing Judicial Commission of the General Assembly.

11. *What is the difference between divesting a minister against his will and deposing him?*

“To divest” is to remove from office without judicial process. Therefore, a minister may be divested without censure. “To divest a minister from office against his will” under (*BCO* 13-2, 34-10) is to remove a minister from office who has been without call for not more than three years or who has not been engaged in the regular discharge of his official functions because it is, in the opinion of the presbytery, due to his unacceptability to the church. “To depose from office,” is to remove the minister from office with censure (*BCO* 30).

12. *When can a Teaching Elder labor outside presbytery bounds?*

Laboring outside the bounds of presbytery means to be engaged in a ministry that is not under the direct authority of the presbytery (i.e., out of ecclesiastical jurisdiction), such as a pastoral charge. A PCA minister laboring in such a ministry remains under the authority of presbytery even though his particular ministry is “outside” of presbytery’s immediate oversight. The presbytery may review the terms of call to that ministry, but it does not have authority to approve the terms. For example, a PCA minister without call who takes a position teaching history at a non-PCA denominational college is not accepting another call any more than if he accepted a job teaching algebra at a public high school, or a job at a retail store. In other words, it is a job and not a ministerial calling. If he were teaching Bible or theology, however, and he wanted to maintain his status as a PCA minister he would need to seek and secure the approval of the presbytery (*BCO* 8-4; 13-2; 20-1).

13. *Are the requirements for an honorably retired teaching elder laboring outside of presbytery bounds (i.e., out of ecclesiastical jurisdiction) in an independent work, the same as for a teaching elder who is not honorably retired?*

In the BCO 8-7, 13-2, the issue becomes what is the court of jurisdiction. Whether he is honorably retired or not, in a work within the jurisdiction and bounds of presbytery, the court of authority and accountability is still his presbytery. The distinction is particularly noted because the honorably retired teaching elder does not have the same requirements of attendance at presbytery meetings or of reporting annually, as do those ministers without call or those laboring out of bounds. The presbytery would be advised to ensure that the honorably retired teaching elder, laboring out of bounds, would continue to have “full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our church.” (BCO 8-7, 24-9).

14. *When can a member of a court have his dissent/objection recorded?*

When a ruling elder disagrees with a motion or proposal that is pending before a session, he may seek to persuade the session to adopt his point of view. After the decision has been made by the session there are several options open to him, such as dissent, protest, objection, complaint, or motion to rescind an action previously adopted. Any member of a court who has a right to vote on a question, and is not satisfied with the action taken by that court is entitled to have a dissent or protest recorded (BCO 45-1 for full quote).

A dissent is a declaration on the part of one or more members of a minority, expressing a different opinion from the majority in its action on any issue before the court, and may be accompanied with the reasons on which it is founded (BCO 45-2). A protest is a more solemn and formal declaration by members of a minority (BCO 45-3 for full quote). An objection is a declaration by one or more members of a court who did not have the right to vote on an appeal or complaint (BCO 45-4 for full quote). If a dissent, protest, or objection is couched in temperate language, and is respectful to the court, it shall be recorded (BCO 45-5 for full quote). A complaint is stronger than a dissent, protest, or objection in that a complaint is a judicial process, which may carry the issue to a higher church court (BCO 43-1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

15. *What are the proper procedures for rescinding, repealing or annulling actions of a previous presbytery meeting?*

A motion to reconsider an action would be out of order if it were made by someone who voted with the minority: “The motion can be made by any member of the committee who *did not vote with the losing side*; or, in other words, the maker of the motion to *Reconsider* can be one who voted with the prevailing side, or one who did not vote at all, or even was absent” (Robert’s Rules of Order, 10th ed. §37). At a later meeting, however, a person who voted in the minority may make a motion to rescind a previous action...In contrast to the case of the motion to *Reconsider*, there is no time limit on making these motions after the adoption of the measure to which they are applied, and they can be moved by any member, regardless of how he voted on the original question.” It would, however, require an affirmative vote of a majority of the entire membership to pass. Moreover, there are limitations on what may be rescinded (RRO, 10th ed. §35). In short, anyone can make the motion to rescind regardless of how he voted on the matter at the previous meeting. It must be seconded. It is debatable. If no prior notice is given, or if there is no statement of the intention of making the motion given in the call of the meeting, a two-thirds vote is needed to pass the motion. If prior notice is given, or if there is a statement of the intention of making the motion given in the call of the meeting, a simple majority vote is needed to pass the motion.

16. *How thoroughly should a minister coming from another denomination be examined (BCO 13-6)?*

The traditional interpretation of BCO 13-6 has been that a minister coming from another denomination should be examined in knowledge and views in Christian experience, theology, the Sacraments and church government. BCO 21-4, especially those parts dealing with licensure, have not been required (e.g., preaching a sermon before presbytery). In other words, a presbytery should satisfy itself that the man has the requisite degrees, biblical languages and can answer knowledge and views questions. If he is found lacking in these areas, a three-fourths vote of presbytery is required to omit or waive these requirements.

It is helpful to note that BCO 13-6 was amended a number of years ago to include “shall examine them thoroughly in knowledge.” Prior to the amendment, the presbytery was only required to examine a man from another denomination with regard to “views” only (just like a PCA minister transferring into another presbytery). This amendment history sheds light on the former practice; the intent of adding “knowledge” was to ensure that men from other denominations not only held confessional views but could also demonstrate how they held them.

17. *Can licensure and ordination exams be combined at the same meeting?*

There are no precedents about a presbytery holding or not holding licensure and ordination exams at the same meeting. It has been done when it seemed to presbytery to be appropriate. A case-by-case approach would be in order. (Presbytery still needs to make sure that internship requirements are satisfied, BCO 19.)

18. *What is the procedure involving the restitution of a Teaching Elder to his ministerial office?*

Only the presbytery that imposed the censure of deposition may lift that censure (BCO 37-8, 9.a) and restore him to ministerial office. If the censure was excommunication from the sacrament of the Lord’s Table and deposition from office, there is a different procedure. Restoration to the sacrament would come through a PCA church session. He would need to join a PCA church (by reaffirmation of faith) and make clear that he had been excommunicated previously. It would be wise for the session to communicate with the clerk of presbytery and receive the particulars. If the session were satisfied with his repentance, they could receive him as a communicant member and remove the censure of excommunication (BCO 37-9.b.; 1-3; 6-4; 57-4, 5, 6). At that point he would be a communicant member of the PCA again, but still not a minister. Though a session would be the court to restore an excommunicated minister to the Lord’s Table, it would certainly be appropriate for the former minister to appear before the presbytery that disciplined him and express his repentance.

19. *How are we to understand BCO 38-3, 4?*

BCO 38-3, 4 allows for a member to withdraw his membership from a church. Both sections also indicate that the session should seek to work pastorally with the member before acceding to the request. If pastoral efforts do not persuade the member, then the session should take no further action but erase his name from the roll and record the circumstances in the minutes. If there are no charges pending or judicial process already begun, the session cannot begin judicial process after receiving the request to withdraw. If a judicial process had already begun, then the session could either erase the name or proceed with and conclude judicial process even in the member's absence. With regard to dealing with a spouse who desires to withdraw while the other spouse does not, the session has to treat

the request on its own merit, not as a family issue (of course, pastoral care should be attempted as mentioned above).

20. Can a presbytery take up a matter from a local church without a complaint or appeal?

No, if only from a rumor; yes, if through review of records – but it cannot overturn an action without a complaint or appeal from the member(s) of the church. If members were charged by the session and wished to take their case to presbytery, the proper procedure for them to follow would be to submit to a trial by the session and then appeal to presbytery (*BCO* 42-2). If they did not submit to a trial, they may not appeal to presbytery (*BCO* 42-2). If they have a complaint, a complaint must first be lodged with the session and the session must have the opportunity to deal with the complaint (*BCO* 43-2; 43-3). One may not take a complaint to presbytery and bypass the session. In considering a case that is properly before it, the presbytery may “annul the whole or any part of the action of the lower court against which the complaint has been made, or send the matter back to the lower court with instructions for a new hearing” (*BCO* 43-10), if the case is a complaint. If the case is an appeal, “The decision of the higher court may be to affirm in whole or in part; to reverse in whole or in part; to render the decision that should have been rendered; or to remand the case to the lower court for a new trial” (*BCO* 42-9).

21. Can a presbytery discipline a church session with a charge of disobedience?

The *BCO* does not give this authority to a presbytery. However, a presbytery has the power “to see that the lawful injunctions of the higher courts are obeyed” (*BCO* 13-9e). Note that this power has to do with “lawful injunctions;” that is, properly determined decisions. Note also that the power of the church is moral and spiritual, ministerial and declarative (*BCO* Preliminary Preface, II, Preliminary Principles, 7, 8, and chapter 3). No court of the church has coercive or civil power over another court.

22. Can a presbytery require a committee of presbytery to visit a church without a session’s permission?

As determined by Judicial Case #48, 1985 (*PCA Digest*, Vol. I, p. 341), *BCO* 11-4 reads in part, “The jurisdiction of these courts is limited by the express provisions of the Constitution.” More specifically, *BCO* 13-9 “contains no express provision, which meaning is clear and undebatable, as would permit a presbytery to require the receiving of a presbytery committee’s visit without a request by or a specific problem in the session or congregation in question” (*PCA Digest*, p. 342). In other words, the *BCO* does not give this authority to a presbytery.

23. How should a judicial commission act and report according to BCO 15-3?

The judicial commission of the presbytery is charged with investigating, absolving or indicting, conducting a trial, rendering a judgment, and presenting a written report to presbytery. The report is not final until it is received by presbytery, which votes to approve or not approve the report. If the report is not approved, the presbytery can choose to hear the case as a body or elect a new commission to rehear the case.

24. May a presbytery nominate to a General Assembly Committee a man other than the alternate from their presbytery (who will automatically be considered)?

Yes, under *BCO* 14-1, 11 and *RAO* 7-4 g. Reasoning: (1) Once a presbytery has nominated a man and he is elected by an action of the General Assembly as an alternate member of a General Assembly Committee or Agency, he is the Assembly’s elected member (somewhat analogous to a motion that is being made and seconded is the property of the

body and may not be withdrawn without the consent of the body). (2) RAO 7-4 c is a not an absolute (note the qualifying term “ordinarily”) and (3) RAO 7-4, g. distinguishes between “new nominee” and “alternates not assuming any vacancies during a year.”

25. *May an alternate member of a General Assembly Committee or Agency serve on a Committee of Commissioners? RAO 13-2?*

No. RAO 13-2 states, “Commissioners serving on Permanent Committees or sub-committees of the Assembly or the staffs thereof are not eligible to serve on any Committees of Commissioners.” An alternate is a committee member who votes only in the absence of a principal member, but he is a member, nevertheless.

26. *Is it constitutional for a session to use a judicial commission to adjudicate a judicial case, or must all judicial cases be heard by the entire session?*

This question arises in the context of some churches with thousands of members and dozens of elders on the session finding it impractical to conduct or try all judicial cases before the entire session. It is constitutional for the session to elect a judicial commission. However, the session must use discretion and must address the wisdom and advisability of electing a judicial commission to adjudicate a judicial case. The primary, though not exclusive, section of the *BCO* relating to the issue of commissions is 15-1:

“A commission differs from an ordinary committee in that while a committee is appointed to examine, consider and report, a commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it, except in the case of judicial commissions of a presbytery appointed under *BCO* 15-3. A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted, to the court appointing it. Upon such submission this record shall be entered on the minutes of the court appointing, except in the case of a presbytery commission serving as a session or a judicial commission as set forth in *BCO* 15-3. When a commission is appointed to serve as an interim session, its actions are the actions of a session, not a presbytery. Every commission of a presbytery or session must submit complete minutes and a report of its activities at least once annually to the court which commissioned it.”

A session may elect to use a judicial commission to adjudicate judicial cases for several reasons:

- *BCO* 15 deals with “Ecclesiastical Commissions” for all three levels of the courts of the church. The presbytery is explicitly named in 15-1, 15-2, and 15-3. The General Assembly is explicitly named in 15-4, 15-5, and 16-6. The session is explicitly named in 15-1 in the last sentence. In that reference, it is not a commission of presbytery *acting* as a session, but a commission *of the session*. “Every commission of a presbytery or session [emphasis added] must submit complete minutes and a report of its activities at least once annually to the court which commissioned it.”
- The *BCO* is not exactly analogous to secular civil and criminal law. The *BCO* is not written as an exhaustive catalog of most possible eventualities, but is primarily a set of principles, with deference to lower courts, and the expectation that courts will use their discretion. Indeed, our Constitution is written in such a way that it sets forth general principles, setting acceptable parameters on many instances, and giving exacting details in a few instances. For example, on the issue of baptism, *WCF XXVIII.7* states that, “Baptism is but once to be administered unto any person.” Therefore, it would not be proper for a PCA minister to re-baptize someone who had previously received a valid Christian baptism. A church member might ask a PCA

pastor for a baptism by immersion because he or she had been baptized by pouring and now wants to be immersed. The PCA pastor would refuse to re-baptize such a person. But what about the validity of Roman Catholic baptisms? The issue has been addressed by General Assemblies in America in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries each coming to the same conclusion, that some sessions may accept Roman Catholic baptisms and some may reject Roman Catholic baptisms. *WCF* chapter II “Of God and of the Holy Trinity” is very exacting, following the Ancient Creeds; chapter III, “Of God’s Eternal Decree,” however, may be interpreted to be infralapsarian, or supralapsarian, though sublapsarianism is definitely excluded. *The Directory of Worship* was originally written as a replacement for the *Book of Common Prayer*. The *BCP* was prescribed worship, a prescribed liturgy that is to be followed word-for-word, with little variation allowed, with a premium set on uniformity; the *DW* is directed worship, essentially setting forth a collection of rubrics, or directions to be followed, allowing for variations, with a premium set on liberty of conscience. The PCA has taken it a step further by adding a preface to the *DW*, declaring only chapters 56, 57, 58 to be part of the Constitution. Some erroneously look on our Constitution in a quasi-congregational perspective, thinking of it as simply advisory in all respects and binding in no respects. It is also erroneous to look upon our constitution as if it were canon law of a hierarchical church or a secular law code that is highly detailed. The insistence that a session may not erect a judicial commission is, in my opinion, based on the latter erroneous perspective.

- *BCO* 32-11 speaks of a “Judicial Committee”:
 “In every process, if deemed expedient there may be a committee appointed, which shall be called the Judicial Committee, and whose duty it shall be to digest and arrange all the papers, and to prescribe, under the direction of the court, the whole order of the proceedings. The members of this committee shall be entitled, notwithstanding their performance of this duty, to sit and vote in the case as members of the court.”

The judicial committee of *BCO* 32-11 is not a commission. The role of the judicial committee is explicitly stated. The erection of a judicial committee by any level of the church courts does *not* negate the right of the church court to form a judicial commission, if it so desires.

Having given a rationale for the constitutional permissibility of the use of a sessional judicial commission, it would be helpful to deal with some objections.

- It may be objected that only Presbytery and General Assembly Judicial Commissions are explicitly named in the *BCO*. The presbytery is explicitly named in 15-1, 15-2, and 15-3. The General Assembly is explicitly named in 15-4, 15-5, and 16-6. The answer is that the session having the power to erect commissions is explicitly named in 15-1 in the last sentence. In that reference, it is not a commission of presbytery *acting* as a session, but a commission *of the session*. A commission may be erected by the session to fulfill virtually any of the responsibilities of the session (see *BCO* 12-5) including, “To inquire into the knowledge, principles and Christian conduct of the church members, under its care; to censure those found delinquent.”
- It may be objected that, since there are no step-by-step procedures for an appeal arising from a trial conducted by a judicial commission of the session, as there are for a presbytery commission (15-3) or the General Assembly’s Standing Judicial Commission (15-5, c.[4]), then no sessional judicial commission is possible. The answer is that *BCO* 15-1 gives the power to the session to erect a judicial commission. Exact detailed procedures for handling cases by a sessional judicial commission need not be

included in the *BCO*. Though appellate civil or criminal procedures are codified in law, the *BCO* is not written as an exhaustive catalog of most possible eventualities, but is primarily a set of principles, with deference to lower courts, and the expectation that courts will use their discretion. Even the General Assembly's Standing Judicial Commission specifies most of the details of its procedures in the "Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission." Some presbyteries use the "Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission" as guidelines for their procedures. It seems to me that a session could have similar appellate procedures, 1) the sessional judicial commission would make its report to the session on each given case committed to the sessional judicial commission, 2) the session would then, without debate, approve or disapprove the judgment, following the principles of *BCO* 15-3; 3) if the session disapproved the judgment, it could appoint another commission to try the case, or the session could elect to try the case before the session as a whole; 4) or the session could refer any strictly constitutional issue(s) to a study committee to report back to the session; 5) a session that uses a sessional judicial commission, may be well advised to use the procedures of the Standing Judicial Commission, of a review of each sessional judicial commission's decision, and/or a rehearing of the case by the full session (see section 18 of the "Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission"); 6) if the decision of the sessional judicial commission were averse to a church member, and the session approved the judgment, the church member in question, could appeal directly to presbytery, following the procedures of *BCO* 42. A particular church member's appellate rights are not removed or diminished by the use of a sessional judicial commission as long as just procedures are followed.

- It may be objected that *BCO* 15-3 speaks of a presbytery's judicial commission, but does not mention a sessional judicial commission. The answer is that this is an argument from silence. *BCO* 15-3 is written for presbytery use. The session is explicitly named in 15-1 in the last sentence. In that reference, it is not a commission of presbytery *acting* as a session, but a commission *of the session*. Though *BCO* 15-3 refers only to presbytery, *BCO* 15-1 does include the session and gives sessions the authority to erect many sorts of commissions, including judicial commissions authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business [judicial cases] referred to them.

- It may be objected that *BCO* Chapter 30 refers to censures inflicted by "church courts," that a sessional judicial commission is not a court, and, therefore, a session may not utilize a sessional judicial commission. The answer is that a commission is authorized by the court appointing it to deliberate and conclude the business referred to it. The actions of a commission are the actions of the court itself.

- It may be objected that the court of original jurisdiction of members of particular churches is the session (*BCO* 33-1, 33-2) that a sessional judicial commission is not a court, and, therefore, a session may not utilize a sessional judicial commission. The answer is that a commission is authorized by the court appointing it to deliberate and conclude the business referred to it. The actions of a commission are the actions of the court itself. Again this goes back to *BCO* 15-1 and *BCO* 15-1 does include session and gives sessions the authority to erect many sorts of commissions, including judicial commissions authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business [judicial cases] referred to them.

- It may be objected that the use of a sessional judicial commission is merely a pragmatic expedient, particularly in larger churches that may have thousands of members and scores of elders. That, of course is not a constitutional argument; the issue is whether the use of a sessional judicial commission is *constitutional*. To assert that sheer pragmatism and mere expediency lie at the root of the use of a sessional

judicial commission is to question the motives of fellow elders. It could be argued, on the other hand that larger churches may either ignore church discipline due to the magnitude of the task of trying dozens of cases before the full session, or they may use sessional judicial commissions to fulfill justly and responsibly the duty of church discipline.

27. *Is it constitutional for a presbytery to conduct a presbytery meeting via teleconferencing to consider a brief docket?*

BCO 13-4 while speaking to the matter of a quorum states, “Any three ministers belonging to the presbytery, together with at least three ruling elders, being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business. However, any presbytery, by a majority vote of those present at a stated meeting, may fix its own quorum provided it is not smaller than the quorum stated in this paragraph.” *Robert’s Rules of Order*, 10th Edition speaks to the issue:

“The coming of the internet and the widespread use of email and the fax machine have stirred interest in the concept of an “electronic meeting.” This edition notes that the opportunity for simultaneous aural communication among all participants is central to the deliberative character of the meeting. It recognizes, therefore, that meetings may be conducted by videoconference or teleconference, when authorized by the bylaws and when regulated by special rules of order and standing rules specifying such things as how recognition is to be sought and the floor obtained. On the other hand, it warns that though e-mail or faxes may provide a suitable substitute for postal mail in the issuance of calls for meetings or the conduct of mail voting, they are not suited for the conduct of the deliberative process under the precedents and procedures common to parliamentary law” (p. xx).

“Efforts to conduct the deliberative process by postal or electronic mail or facsimile (fax) transmission – which are not recommended – must be expressly authorized by the bylaws and should be supported by special rules of order and standing rules as appropriate, since so many situations unprecedented in parliamentary law may arise and since many procedures common to parliamentary law are not applicable” (see pp. 482-483) (p. 20).

“A *meeting* of an assembly is a single official gathering of its members in one room or area to transact business for a length of time during which there is no cessation of proceedings and the members do not separate, unless for a short recess, as defined below. (For modification of the “one-room-or-area” requirement when the bylaws authorize meeting by videoconference or teleconference, see pages 482-483)” (pp. 79-80).

“Conduct of Business in Committees...The bylaws may authorize a board or committee (or even a relatively small assembly) to meet by videoconference or teleconference. If they do, then such meeting must be conducted by a technology that allows all persons participating to hear each other at the same time (and, if a videoconference, to see each other as well). The opportunity for simultaneous communication is central to the deliberative character of a meeting, and is what distinguishes it from attempts to do business by postal or electronic mail or by fax (see page 2). It is advisable to adopt special rules of order and standing rules as appropriate, to specify precisely how recognition is to be sought and the floor obtained during videoconferences and teleconferences (pp 482-483).

In April 2002, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly sought the advice of the CCB (RAO 7-2 1) as to the constitutionality of presbytery meetings, (meetings of the court as a whole, not committee or commission meetings), being conducted by videoconferencing or teleconferencing. It was the opinion of the Stated Clerk that BCO 13-4 requires that a meeting of presbytery must be “at the time and place appointed,” i.e., a “one-room-or-area” meeting. The CCB concurred with the opinion of the Stated Clerk (Minutes, CCB, April 23, 2002).

PLEASE NOTE: The 2021 General Assembly sent to the presbyteries a change to the BCO regarding virtual meetings. If that change passes, this information will be updated.

28. *Must a congregation approve a severance package to be given to a minister whose pastoral call is about to be dissolved by presbytery?*

No, a congregation does not approve a severance package for a minister when the congregation votes to petition presbytery to dissolve a pastoral relationship. The congregation approves the terms of the call initially (BCO 20-6), but the BCO does not directly speak to the issue of a severance package. Therefore, it would be a budgetary matter to be approved by the session (BCO 12-5 b).

29. *What is the status of “Presbytery Standing Rules or By-laws” and “Church Standing Rules or By-laws” in relation to the Book of Church Order?*

As a matter of general principle “Presbytery Standing Rules or By-laws” and “Church Standing Rules or By-laws” may complement the *Book of Church Order* but may not contradict the *Book of Church Order*. In some instances allowable parameters for variation from the BCO are stated (BCO 12-1, 13-4). However, a local church or a presbytery may not adopt procedures that violate the rights of persons or entities as specified in the BCO. The General Assembly operates with the “Constitution of the Church” being its primary authority, “Rules of Assembly Operation” as a secondary authority, and *Robert’s Rules of Order* as a tertiary authority. Likewise, “Presbytery Standing Rules or By-laws” and “Church Standing Rules or By-laws” are a secondary authority to the “Constitution of the Church.”



The Presbyterian Church in America Non-hierarchical Presbyterianism

L. Roy Taylor

Stated Clerk Emeritus of the
General Assembly of the
Presbyterian Church in America

The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) was founded in 1973 as a denomination with the vision to be “Faithful to the Scriptures, True to the Reformed Faith, and Obedient the Great Commission.” The PCA was begun by Ruling Elders and Ministers who had sought over two generations to reverse trends in our former denominational connection which we believed to be (1) a departure from the evangelical Reformed Faith and (2) an emergence of an increasingly coercive denominational church polity.¹ So the PCA emerged because of both theological and church governance issues.

Church polity is based not only on explicit scriptural teachings, but also on biblical principles, biblical precedents, common sense, Christian prudence, and historical-circumstantial factors (*Westminster Confession of Faith* I-6).² All of these have affected the PCA’s polity, which has resulted in a grass-roots Presbyterianism.

There is a significant difference between the PCA’s Presbyterian polity and the polity of hierarchical Churches. In an hierarchical Church such as the Roman Catholic Church there is “canon law” which deals in great detail about what is to be done in numerous

¹ For personal accounts of some “founding fathers” regarding the beginnings of the PCA, detailing examples of these two roots causes for establishing the PCA, see *How the Gold Has Become Dim*, Morton H. Smith. Greenville, SC: Greenville Theological Seminary Press, 1973; *I Am Reminded*, Kennedy Smartt, privately published, 1998; *To God All Praise and Glory*, Paul G. Settle. Atlanta: PCA Administrative Committee, 1998; and *Hitherto: A Biographical Testimony*, Harold Borchert, n.d., privately published. All are available from the PCA Christian Education and Publications Bookstore, www.cepbookstore.com.

² “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word: and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, [emphasis added] common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.” The Westminster Confession of Faith is the doctrinal Standard of the PCA. It was originally written by the Westminster Assembly in London 1643-1648, was adopted by the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) shortly thereafter. It was adopted by colonial Presbyterians in America in 1729 (with a few revisions) and adopted by the PCA in 1973.

situations. In a Church with Episcopal polity (ruled by bishops), bishops exercise ecclesiastical authority over churches and often hold title to local church property.

One of the features of the Protestant Reformation was the restoration of Presbyterian church governance in a number of Continental Reformed Churches and in the Church of Scotland. The Church of Scotland became the Mother Church of Presbyterian Churches around the world. It is the understanding of a number of historical theologians that the Church of the First and Second Centuries had a Presbyterian governance, but the Church developed an Episcopal governance by the mid-Second Century due to several circumstantial factors.³ But within Presbyterianism there have been, and still are, two perspectives; an hierarchal, top-down view and a non-hierarchal, bottom-up view. These two different perspectives were evident at the Westminster Assembly.⁴ When colonial Presbyterians organized as a General Assembly in 1789 they adapted Presbyterian church governance to the free church situation in America, in contrast to the state church system in the Britain and Europe. Additionally, the first American General Assembly adopted some Preliminary Principles authored by John Witherspoon.⁵ Those preliminary

³ For a biblical-exegetical and historical argument that the Church of the First and Second Centuries had a Presbyterian polity carried over from the Old Testament and synagogue system, see J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1953, reprint of 1913 edition), 181-269. Dr. Lightfoot was the Anglican Bishop of Durham in the 19th century as well as a New Testament and Patristic scholar at Cambridge University. For an explanation of the factors producing the episcopacy from the mid-Second Century forward, see L. Roy Taylor, "Presbyterianism" in *Who Runs the Church: Four Views on Church Government* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 2004).

⁴ For an account of the origins and development of these two types of Presbyterianism in The British Isles and America, see Paul R. Gilchrist, *Distinctives of Biblical Presbyterianism* (Atlanta: World Reformed Fellowship, 2002). Gilchrist demonstrates that an hierarchal, top-down, aristocratic Presbyterianism was advocated by some commissioners to the Westminster Assembly (ex. Samuel Rutherford and Robert Baillie) in response to the advocacy of Congregationalism by a few commissioners who later became Congregationalists. But a non-hierarchal, bottom-up, democratic types of Presbyterianism was the practice of Continental Reformed Churches and advocated by some Westminster commissioners such as George Gillespie and Alexander Henderson. Moreover, the Church of Scotland established a General Assembly first, then Presbyteries, then congregations. In colonial America the process was the opposite, congregations first, then Presbyteries, then synods, and finally a General Assembly. Presbyterianism in America was more of a grass-roots movement.

⁵ The Rev. John Witherspoon was the first President of the College of New Jersey (Princeton University), the only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence. The by-word in England concerning the American Revolution, "The Americans have run off with a Presbyterian parson," referred to Witherspoon's influence. Several of the Founding Fathers of the American Republic were his students at Princeton (ex. James Madison) who were involved in the development of the Constitution of the United States and the writing of the Federalist Papers urging the adoption of the Constitution. There are several parallels between the Presbyterian governance adopted by the First American Presbyterian General Assembly and the U.S. Constitution. These "Preliminary Principles" are:

1. God alone is Lord of the conscience and has left it free from any doctrines or commandments of men (a) which are in any respect contrary to the Word of God, or (b) which, in regard to matters of faith and worship, are not governed by the Word of God. Therefore, the rights of private judgment in all matters that respect religion are universal and inalienable. No religious constitution should be supported by the civil power further than may be necessary for protection and security equal and common to all others.
2. In perfect consistency with the above principle, every Christian Church, or union or association of particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of

principles espoused a *non-hierarchal*, bottom-up, from-the-ground-up, democratic Presbyterianism.

As we see it, over the years the larger Presbyterian Church (now called the Presbyterian Church, USA) underwent a metamorphosis from a democratic type of Presbyterianism into an hierarchal Presbyterianism. *The Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church, USA is now written as “church law” and is stated in much greater detail than the BCO of the PCA because the PCUSA is hierarchal Presbyterianism with the emphasis on the higher courts of the Church directing the lower courts. The PCUSA BCO deals much more extensively with detailed procedures covering a wide variety of situations. Therefore, the PC(USA) BCO is much longer than the PCA BCO. Moreover, in recent civil court cases regarding disputes over local church property the PCUSA argues that the PCUSA is an hierarchal church with the Presbytery being tantamount to a bishop.

By contrast, the PCA is a *non-hierarchal*, grass-roots type of Presbyterianism. One of the major reasons for the formation of the PCA was to revert to a democratic Presbyterianism. The PCA BCO is written more *as a set of principles*, emphasizing the use of discretion and wisdom by the lower courts. The “Preface” of the BCO lists “The Preliminary Principles” that are not merely an introductory statement to the constitution

its internal government which Christ has appointed. In the exercise of this right it may, notwithstanding, err in making the terms of communion either too lax or too narrow; yet even in this case, it does not infringe upon the liberty or the rights of others, but only makes an improper use of its own.

3. Our blessed Saviour, for the edification of the visible Church, which is His body, has appointed officers not only to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, but also to exercise discipline for the preservation both of truth and duty. It is incumbent upon these officers and upon the whole Church in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous, observing in all cases the rules contained in the Word of God.
4. Godliness is founded on truth. A test of truth is its power to promote holiness according to our Saviour's rule, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). No opinion can be more pernicious or more absurd than that which brings truth and falsehood upon the same level. On the contrary, there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise it would be of no consequence either to discover truth or to embrace it.
5. While, under the conviction of the above principle, it is necessary to make effective provision that all who are admitted as teachers be sound in the faith, there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good character and principles may differ. In all these it is the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other.
6. Though the character, qualifications and authority of church officers are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method of officer investiture, the power to elect persons to the exercise of authority in any particular society resides in that society.
7. All church power, whether exercised by the body in general, or by representation, is only ministerial and declarative since the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice. No church judicatory may make laws to bind the conscience. All church courts may err through human frailty, yet it rests upon them to uphold the laws of Scripture though this obligation be lodged with fallible men.
8. Since ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral or spiritual in its object, and not attended with any civil effects, it can derive no force whatever, but from its own justice, the approbation of an impartial public, and the countenance and blessing of the great Head of the Church.

or historical information, but are an integral part of the constitution, or the lenses through which the rest of the BCO is to be viewed. It is not envisioned that the PCA BCO would have detailed instructions on virtually every situation. When faced with situations and circumstances that are not dealt with in detail in the PCA BCO, sessions and presbyteries should exercise their own wisdom and discretion within the parameters of biblical principles and the constitution of the PCA, particularly the “Preliminary Principles,” (the constitution is the *BCO* and the *Westminster Standards*).⁶ The voluntary nature of the PCA is explicitly stated in BCO 25-9; 25-10 regarding church property⁷ and in BCO 25-11 regarding the process of a local church’s withdrawing from the denomination.⁸ Both of these statements are consistent with the “Preliminary Principles.” In recent court cases involving employment law, the PCA successfully argued that as a *non-hierarchical denomination*, local church pastors and local church staff members are not employees of a Presbytery or the General Assembly.⁹ The PCA argued that the relationship of a PCA

⁶ The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, which is subject to and subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the inerrant Word Of God, consists of its doctrinal standards set forth in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, together with the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, and the *Book of Church Order*, comprising the Form of Government, the Rules of Discipline and the Directory for Worship; all as adopted by the Church (BCO, Preface, § III).

⁷ **25-9.** All particular churches shall be entitled to hold, own and enjoy their own local properties, without any right of reversion whatsoever to any Presbytery, General Assembly or any other courts hereafter created, trustees or other officers of such courts.

25-10. The provisions of this *BCO* 25 are to be construed as a solemn covenant whereby the Church as a whole promises never to attempt to secure possession of the property of any congregation against its will, whether or not such congregation remains within or chooses to withdraw from this body. All officers and courts of the Church are hereby prohibited from making any such attempt.

⁸ **25-11.** While a congregation consists of all the communing members of a particular church, and in matters ecclesiastical the actions of such local congregation or church shall be in conformity with the provisions of this *Book of Church Order*, nevertheless, in matters pertaining to the subject matters referred to in this *BCO* 25, including specifically the right to affiliate with or become a member of this body or a Presbytery hereof and the right to withdraw from or to sever any affiliation of connection with this body or any Presbytery hereof, action may be taken by such local congregation or local church in accordance with the civil laws applicable to such local congregation or local church; and as long as such action is taken in compliance with such applicable civil laws, then such shall be the action of the local congregation or local church.

It is expressly recognized that each local congregation or local church shall be competent to function and to take actions covering the matters set forth herein as long as such action is in compliance with the civil laws with which said local congregation or local church must comply, and this right shall never be taken from said local congregation or local church without the express consent of and affirmative action of such local church or congregation.

Particular churches need remain in association with any court of this body only so long as they themselves so desire. The relationship is voluntary, based upon mutual love and confidence, and is in no sense to be maintained by the exercise of any force or coercion whatsoever. [Emphasis added]. A particular church may withdraw from any court of this body at any time for reasons which seem to it sufficient.

⁹ See Susanne MacDonald vs. Grace Church, Seattle, Northwest Presbytery and the PCA, a Corporation, US District Court For the Western District of Washington at Seattle, and Federal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The District Court ruled that the Presbytery and General Assembly are not the employers of local

minister to a Presbytery is analogous to that of a lawyer with a bar association. The bar association examines the lawyer regarding expertise and character, but a law firm, not the bar, is the attorney's employer.

So, the PCUSA represents itself as a hierarchal denomination; the PCA represents itself as a *non-hierarchal* denomination.

The PCA is non-hierarchal in that: (1) local churches, Presbyteries, and the General Assembly are distinct and separate civil entities and (2) the authority of the Church is moral and spiritual, ministerial and declarative. Two entire chapters of the BCO (Chapters 3 and 11) are devoted to that explanation. Yet the PCA is spiritually united (*not civilly* connected) and Presbyterian churches are inter-dependent, not independent.¹⁰ This connectionalism is expressed in our confessional theology, our system of government and discipline, and our cooperative ministry.¹¹ PCA founding fathers Cannada and Williamson so state in their book:

PCA church pastors of local PCA church staff. The ruling was upheld by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Plaintiff filed six actions in various venues on the matter and did not prevail in any of them.

¹⁰ Note that I define a connectional Church as follows: "By 'connectional' we mean that local churches see themselves as part of the larger Church, that local churches are not independent but are accountable to the larger Church, and that local churches do not minister alone but in cooperation with the larger Church." (Taylor, *Who Runs the Church*, p. 75). Such a definition does not require or even imply that churches must be civilly connected in order to be connectional.

¹¹ **Doctrinal Fidelity:** No system of church polity can absolutely guarantee theological integrity among its ministers and office-bearers. Apostasy and heresy have cropped up in branches of the Church with all types of church government. Nevertheless, Presbyterian church polity has built-in safeguards that will work, *if* the system is faithfully followed. First, a Reformed-Presbyterian Church has a binding confessional doctrinal standard that is not just an advisory consensus statement. Second, the doctrinal standards of a Reformed-Presbyterian Church are derived from scripture, relying upon the Holy Spirit, benefiting from the wisdom of the theological consensus of the Church throughout the ages. Finally, ministers and office-bearers are required to adhere to the biblical system of doctrine for ordination and continued ministry.

Mutual Accountability: In a Church with a Presbyterian-representative-connectional system, there is mutual accountability not only in doctrinal integrity, but also for one's manner of life. Historically, the Reformed-Presbyterian Churches have regarded the "marks of the Church" to be (1) the faithful preaching of the Word, (2) the proper administration of the sacraments, and (3) the practice of discipline. In a Presbyterian system the members of the local church are accountable to the elders of that church, ministers and churches are accountable to the presbytery, and presbyteries are accountable to the general assembly. There are carefully detailed procedures to be followed, once a judicial process of discipline has been instituted. Moreover, there is the possibility of appeal to the larger Church, the Presbytery, or even the General Assembly.

Cooperative Ministry: To be a Presbyterian Church involves not only a mutual commitment to a confessional doctrinal standard and mutual accountability, but also a commitment to cooperative ministry. That is based on an ecclesiology which posits that the Church is more than the local church, that local churches ministering together as a regional Church or national Church can accomplish more in ministry than local churches ministering separately. Because the Church is a covenant community of the people of God, local churches are not independent, but interdependent, not only in doctrinal confessions and accountability, and in cooperative ministry. This is not to say that churches with other forms of church government cannot have effective cooperative ministries, but that for Presbyterians cooperative ministry is a matter of theological principle, not merely practical strategy. (Taylor. *Op. cit.* pp. 96-97).

The thing that is special about the PCA is that there is a clear and vital spiritual connection between the Congregations, the Presbyteries, and the General Assembly. Accordingly it is entirely proper to designate the polity of the PCA as being “connectional” as long as it is made clear that the connection is a spiritual connection between the Congregations, the Presbyteries and the General Assembly and there is no connection of any kind between the civil entities formed by them. The members of the Congregations, the Presbyteries and the General Assembly make up the membership of the respective civil entities formed by them and are, therefore, in complete control of those civil entities. *Accordingly, since there is a vital spiritual connection between the Congregations, the Presbyteries, and the General Assembly in the PCA and each has complete control of the civil entity formed by it, the PCA does not consist of a group of independent local churches that are free to teach and promote whatever they see fit.*¹²

When a person joins a congregation he voluntarily takes a vow to submit himself to the government and discipline of the church (BCO 57-5.5). When a ruling elder or deacon is ordained he vows to submit himself unto his brethren in the Lord (BCO 24-5.5) and affirms that he believes that the form of government and discipline of the PCA conform to general principles of biblical polity (BCO 24-5.3). Ministers take similar vows upon ordination (BCO 21-5.3, 4). When a local church is constituted as a church the congregation as a whole promises to operate on the principles of the faith and order [doctrine and church governance] of the PCA (BCO 5-8.3). When an existing congregation transfers into a PCA presbytery, the elders of the church, as representatives of the congregation, vow to uphold the doctrine and polity of the PCA (BCO 13-8).

When members, ruling elders, deacons and ministers take such vows they voluntarily place themselves under the *spiritual* authority of the Church. When ruling elders, deacons and ministers affirm that they believe that the form of government and discipline of the PCA conform to general principles of biblical polity, they voluntarily pledge themselves to exercise their office in accordance with the constitution of the PCA. Those who have taken such vows have a moral responsibility (though not a legal obligation) to abide by the decision, judgment or order of a church court of original jurisdiction, or they may carry the matter forward until a higher court decides it (BCO 43 details the complaint process; BCO 42 details the appeals process).¹³ By taking the vows of membership or ordination one agrees to abide by the authority of the court of original jurisdiction and higher courts as well because of the spiritual connectionalism of the Church (BCO 11-3, 11-4). Once the higher court has handled the matter finally, there is, because of the vows they have taken and theological beliefs they have espoused, a moral responsibility (though not a legal obligation) to abide by the final disposition of the matter as long as they are members of the PCA. A person may think that he cannot in

¹² Robert C. Cannada and W. Jack Williamson. *The Historic Polity of the PCA*. Pp. 34-35. (Italics in original).

¹³ In PCA parlance an appeal deals only with a person who has undergone an ecclesiastical trial; a complaint deals with all other constitutional irregularities.

good conscience accept the final disposition of the matter after the complaint or appellate process is complete, in which case he may leave the PCA without coercion.

It should be noted that all members, sessions, Presbyteries and the General Assembly of the PCA are morally obligated to follow the constitution of the PCA. Blind obedience, however, may not be required by any church officer or church court.¹⁴ Church courts that violate the constitution of the PCA may themselves be subject to ecclesiastical trial.¹⁵

Thus, the Presbyterian Church in America is Presbyterian (governed by elders elected by the people whom they represent), yet a democratic type of Presbyterianism; it is connectional, but non-hierarchical, in that the power of the Church is not civil or coercive but moral and spiritual, ministerial and declarative; it is constitutional not authoritarian, that is, all of her members, officers, and church courts are to operate within the framework of the constitution of the Church and may not resort to arbitrary use of ecclesiastical authority that is contrary to the Church constitution.

Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, “The Rules of Assembly Operation,” “The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission,” and/or *Robert’s Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA or staff members of the Office of the Stated Clerk are for information only and are not authoritative rulings that may only be made by the courts of the Church. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not represent parties in ecclesiastical judicial cases. Parties to potential cases or cases in process are responsible for their own constitutional and procedural knowledge and understanding. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not give legal advice. When legal advice is needed, professional legal counsel should be secured from one familiar with applicable laws and regulations.

¹⁴ *Westminster Confession of Faith* XX-II. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in any thing, contrary to His Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship. So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also. [Emphasis added].

¹⁵ BCO 40-6. In process against a lower court, the trial shall be conducted according to the rules provided for process against individuals, so far as they may be applicable.

PCA CALL PACKAGE GUIDELINES

The 40th PCA General Assembly originally approved the PCA Call Package Guidelines designed by Geneva Benefits.

A survey of PCA Teaching Elders revealed that a significant majority of ordained ministers in the PCA desire more guidance in structuring their call packages. In response, Geneva Benefits created the Guidelines. The Guidelines provide practical guidance regarding call package content and structure, covering the essential elements of TE call packages and review other important compensation and tax issues affecting ministers. REs, TEs and TE spouses are encouraged to review this information to enhance their understanding of well-structured call packages.

The Call Package Guidelines have been updated to include new material based on feedback from our churches and presbyteries. Sections enhanced include those related to salary and the shortcomings of lump-sum call packages; sections added include proper uses of the document, counseling & coaching and sabbaticals.

Copies of the new version of the Call Package Guidelines may be requested from Geneva's office by phone at 678-825-1260, by email at contact@genevabenefits.org, or downloaded from Geneva's website – <https://genevabenefits.org/call-package-guidelines/>.

If you are looking for the Sample Form for Terms of Call, it is on the next page.

APPENDIX J

SAMPLE FORM FOR TERMS OF CALL

____ (Church Name) ____ (PCA) being on sufficient grounds well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you, ____ (Minister's Name) ____, and having good hopes from our knowledge of your labors that your ministrations in the Gospel will be profitable to our special interests, do earnestly call you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. That you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to provide you with the following salary, benefits, vacations, and leaves of absence.

Salary and Housing Allowances

_____ basis
(weekly, monthly, etc.)

Gross Salary, which includes housing allowance
Amount Designated as Housing Allowance*

\$ _____
\$ _____

Benefits

Primary Benefits

Healthcare and Medicare Supplement Insurance/Allowance \$ _____
Retirement Savings** -amount equal to _____ % of salary + housing \$ _____
Long Term Disability Insurance – replaces _____ % of salary + housing \$ _____
Life Insurance – amount equal to _____ times salary + housing \$ _____
Social Security/Medicare Allowance \$ _____
Equity Allowance for ministers who are living in a manse \$ _____
Leadership Counseling/Coaching \$ _____

Secondary Benefits

Dental \$ _____
Vision \$ _____
HSA (Health Savings Account)*** \$ _____

Total Benefits

\$ _____

Temporary Benefits

Relocation expenses will be reimbursed but shall not exceed the following \$ _____
Other \$ _____

Temporary Benefits Total

\$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNTS

\$ _____

Vacations and Leaves of Absence

Vacation	_____ Days	Holiday Leave	_____ Days
Paid Sick Leave	_____ Days	Paternity Leave	_____ Days
Bereavement	_____ Days	Educational Leave	_____ Days
Sabbatical Leave	_____ Days, after _____ years		

Attestation

I, having moderated the congregational meeting which extended a call to ____ (Minister's Name) ____ for his ministerial services, do certify that the call has been made in all respects according to the rules laid down in the Book of Church Order, and that the persons who signed the call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.

Clerk of Session:

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Minister-Elect:

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Send a copy to each of the following: 1) Minister-Elect 2) Stated clerk of the Presbytery

*Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code allows a minister to exclude a housing allowance from their taxable salary for eligible housing related expenses (i.e., mortgage payment, rent payments, utilities, etc.). It is important to note that the housing allowance is excludable for income tax purposes only (e.g., federal, and most states). It is not excludable for Self-Employment tax purposes (i.e., SECA) which are paid into the Social Security and Medicare system.

A minister's total cash salary can be broken down into two parts: 1) Taxable Salary and 2) Housing Allowance (Partially Taxable Salary).

Minister's Salary

Taxable Salary	Housing Allowance (Partially Taxable Salary)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxable for Self-Employment Tax purposes • Taxable for Federal Income Tax purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxable only for Self-Employment Tax purposes

** There is an annual limit on the amount of total contributions (i.e., employee and employer contributions) that can be made to a 403(b) plan. This limit is referred to as the 415(c) limit. However, it is important to note that a minister's housing allowance cannot be included as part of includible compensation because it is not a component of a minister's gross income (1.425-2(d) of income tax regulations). This limit may reduce the amount that can be contributed to a retirement account even though the call package guidelines formula includes it (i.e., retirement contributions are a percentage of salary and housing allowance).

*** Health Savings Account requires a high deductible health savings account eligible plan.

Uniform Curriculum and Ordination Requirements

L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk Emeritus, PCA

The BCO's ordinary educational requirements for ordination as a minister are stated in BCO 21-4:

An intern applying for ordination shall be required to present a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved college or university, and also a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved theological seminary or authentic testimonials of having completed a regular course of theological studies, or a certificate of completion of and endorsement from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America.

With the growth of two-year M.A. programs among seminaries, a question arises a two-year M.A. degree from a theological seminary meets the ordination requirements set forth in the BCO. If an M.A. is the only theological education the candidate has had, then the M.A. alone would not meet the educational requirements because a two-year M.A. degree does not meet the requirements of "a certificate of completion of and endorsement from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America." The Uniform Curriculum adopted by the General Assembly (see Minutes of the General Assembly, 1978, p.214, Appendix G, IV). The Uniform Curriculum is divided into three major areas with supervised practical experience required in each area:

1. Scripture
 - a. English Bible
 - b. Biblical languages
 - Hebrew
 - Greek
 - c. Methods and Interpretation
 - d. Supervised Practical Experiences
2. Doctrine
 - a. Church History
 - b. Apologetics
 - c. Theology and Ethics
 - d. Presbyterian Church Polity
 - e. Supervised Practical Experiences
3. Practical Theology
 - a. Pastor's personal life
 - b. Worship
 - c. Evangelism
 - d. Missiology
 - e. Pastoral Care
 - f. Christian Education

- g. Pastoral Administration
- h. Supervised Practical Experiences

Typically a two-year M.A. program has only one biblical language or neither biblical language, is deficient in Practical Theology, and has little or no supervised practical experience. Since an M.A. program is a two-year rather than a three-year program, it may cover some of the same areas of an M.Div. program but may not be to the same depth or extent.

There are three models to satisfy ordination requirements:

1. The three-year M.Div. program plus one-year internship (Three plus One Model) is the preferred program but there are alternatives.
2. One alternative is the Two Years of academic training in an extension seminary or Distance Learning program plus two years of tutorial training in Practical Theology and Supervised Practical Experiences under the supervision of Presbytery (Two Extension plus Two Serving Model). CTS and RTS both now offer two-year accredited M.A. degrees via Distance Learning.
3. A third alternative is the two years of residential study in an approved seminary (usually for an M.A. or M.T.S. degree) plus two years of tutorial training in Practical Theology and Supervised Practical Experiences under the supervision of Presbytery (Two Seminary plus Two Tutorial Model).

It should be noted that if either of the Two plus Two Models are used, the Presbytery must follow “a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America” that satisfies the content and Supervised Practical Experiences of the Uniform Curriculum.

Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, “The Rules of Assembly Operation,” “The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission,” and/or *Robert’s Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA are of an advisory nature and are not authoritative rulings that may only be made by the courts of the Church. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not give legal advice. When legal advice is needed, professional legal counsel should be secured from one familiar with applicable laws and regulations.

Extraordinary Clause for Ordination, BCO 21-4

L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk Emeritus PCA

The *Book of Church Order* uses the term “ordinarily” to designate the usual procedure that is to be followed but allows for the courts of the Church to make exceptions to usual practices within the parameters of the PCA Constitution. One such instance is the so-called “extraordinary clause” for ordination of ministers (BCO 21-4) regarding the educational requirements for ordination.

One of the results of the Reformation was that Reformed, Lutheran, and Anglican Churches expected their ministers to be educationally prepared for ministry. This is reflected in our *BCO* educational requirements for ordination. The usual preparation for ministry is a college education followed by a three-year divinity program.

Prior to the mid-1960s, the first degree in divinity was called a Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.), just as the first degree in law was called a Bachelor of Laws (LLB). After the 1960s, the nomenclature was changed from B.D. to Master of Divinity (M.Div.). The standard law degree became Juris Doctor (J.D.).

In earlier times one could be tutored for ministry by a minister, or attend a theological seminary. Prospective lawyers could “read law” under an attorney or go to law school in preparation for the law exam. Our *BCO* educational requirements for ministry (BCO 21-4) may be completed in the traditional formal education, having “a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved college or university, and also a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved theological seminary, or by “authentic testimonials of having completed a regular course of theological studies, or a certificate of completion of and endorsement from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America.”

The *Book of Church Order* specifies that a candidate for the PCA ministry is to submit himself to the care and guidance of the presbytery in his course of study and of practical training to prepare himself for ministry (BCO 18-1, 18-4). The *BCO* does not state the seminary a candidate must or may attend, though *BCO* 21-4 speaks of an “approved theological seminary” as one of several requirements for ordination. The only seminary owned and operated by the General Assembly of the PCA is Covenant Theological Seminary. Historically, the three seminaries that have provided the greatest number ministers for the PCA are Covenant, Reformed, and Westminster seminaries. A review of *the PCA Yearbook, Ministerial Directory* will reveal that Presbyteries have accepted ministers and candidates for ordination from numerous other seminaries, not just Covenant, Reformed and Westminster. Approving a candidate’s choice of a seminary to attend or accepting candidate’s M.Div. from any seminary is a discretionary decision of a Presbytery.

In order to assist Presbyteries, the Six General Assembly approved a curriculum (*BCO* 21-4 b., see *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 1978, p.214, Appendix G, IV).). The Uniform Curriculum is divided into three major areas (Scripture, Doctrine, and Practical Theology) with supervised practical experience required in each area.

With the growth of two-year M.A. programs among seminaries, a question arises whether a two-year M.A. degree from a theological seminary meets the ordination requirements set forth in the *BCO*. If an M.A. is the *only* theological education the candidate has had, and the M.A. has not been supplemented by some program of instruction to cover all of the requirements of the curriculum approved by the General Assembly, then the M.A. alone would not meet the educational requirements because a two-year M.A. degree does not meet the requirements of “a certificate of completion of and endorsement from a

theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America”.

The General Assembly has spoken to the issue of the proper use of the extraordinary clause.

- In 1976 Tennessee Valley Presbytery asked for an interpretation of the extraordinary clause. The Committee on Judicial Business (later renamed the Committee on Constitutional Business) opined, “The Committee gives the following opinion that each Presbytery has the right and the responsibility to interpret the “Extraordinary Clause” for itself and its action in no way binds the action of any other Presbytery” (*Minutes of the 4th General Assembly*, 1976, p. 72).
- In 1981 the General Assembly adopted the Committee on Judicial Business’ recommendation that “The General Assembly recognizes that the use of the extraordinary clause is left to the discretion of an individual Presbytery subject to the review of the General Assembly and to the process provided for in a complaint. The General Assembly declares that the use of the extraordinary clause should be limited to the extraordinary circumstances of the church or the proven extraordinary gifts of the man. The Assembly would take notice, however, that there has been an increasing laxity in the application of the clause. The Assembly would, therefore, counsel that Presbyteries exercise diligence and care in the use of this provision in order that they not prevent the ordination of a candidate for whom there are truly exceptional circumstances not ordain a person who is inadequately prepared for the ministry” (*M9GA*, 1981, p.122).

Proper Use of the Extraordinary Clause

- In the discretion of the Presbytery, there are extraordinary circumstances in the church that wishes to call the candidate (*BCO* 21-4 h.), or also there are proven extraordinary gifts (*BCO* 21-4 g., h.) exhibited by the candidate and ascertained by the Presbytery.
- If the Presbytery omits any of the educational requirements, it may only do so by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote and the reason(s) for the omission(s) must be recorded in the minutes (*BCO* 21-4 a.).
- If the Presbytery omits any of the areas of the parts of the trials for ordination, it may only do so by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote (*BCO* 21-4 c.) and the reason(s) for the omission(s) must be recorded in the minutes (*BCO* 21-4 d.).

The Office of the Stated Clerk may give advice and counsel regarding constitutional and procedural matters. Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, “The Rules of Assembly Operation,” “The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission,” and/or *Robert’s Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA or staff members of the Office of the Stated Clerk are for information only, however, and are not authoritative rulings that may only be made by the courts of the Church. Responses to inquiries are based on information supplied by the inquirer, which may not necessarily be comprehensive. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not represent parties in ecclesiastical judicial cases and may not prepare judicial cases for parties. Parties to potential cases or cases in process are responsible for their own constitutional and procedural knowledge and understanding. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not give legal advice. When legal advice is needed, professional legal counsel should be secured from one familiar with applicable laws and regulations.

Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains
and Military Personnel (PRCC):
Presbytery/Classis Checklist

Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCC):
Presbytery/Classis Checklist

Member churches of the PRCC denominations or Presbyteries/Classis (see list below) may have men who seek a pastoral call as a chaplain. Chaplain positions can be in a military or civilian setting and can be full-time or part-time.

A Call to chaplain ministry IS an acceptable call for ordination.

It is also important to know that the PRCC is designated by each member denomination as the ONLY authorized source of ecclesiastical endorsement to any chaplaincy position (military and civilian) within all PRCC denominations.

This checklist is intended to cover the critical steps necessary for one to become a chaplain. But, if YOUR question(s) are not covered below, please contact one of the following PRCC representatives:

- For all general chaplain endorsing questions and all Military Chaplain positions and seminary students who want to become Chaplain Candidates, contact James R. Carter, the only authorized Endorser for Chaplains of all types within PRCC denominations and presbyteries/classis: Email: jcarter@pcanet.org / Phone: 954-850-2448 / Fax: 678-825-1252
- For specific questions about Civilian Chaplain positions (including VA) and TEs enrolling in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) programs, contact Michael Stewart: Email: mstewart@pcanet.org / Phone: 706-329-3600

1. ___ Review PRCC Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), found on the PRCC website, <https://resources.pcamna.org/resource/chaplain-presbytery-resources/>

Presbyteries: Please send questions that are not answered on this list to: ChaplainMinistries@pcanet.org. We will always be updating this FAQ list with your help and input.

2. ___ Ensure all normal ordination steps are covered in the man's request to serve as a chaplain. Be sure to ascertain whether he has the gifts to serve in a non-parish, pluralistic setting.

3. ___ Ensure the man has a written Call for ordination or ordination transfer purposes, i.e., a military "Endorsement/Defense Department Form 2088" or a job description/offer or endorsement from a civilian or governmental institution. The PRCC can provide the Presbytery with a Call Letter to Chaplain Ministry, if needed.

4. ___ Men who are being ordained to the Military and Civilian Chaplaincy are ordinarily ordained as Evangelists to allow them to perform the Sacraments. This is to be renewed annually per PCA BCO 8-6.
5. ___ Ensure the man has applied for an endorsement through the PRCC application process. This is mandatory for those whose ministry requires an endorsement (For those men whose chaplain ministry does not require an endorsement, the presbytery, as part of its oversight duties, should encourage the man to request an endorsement from the PRCC).
6. ___ Ensure the PRCC Endorser has received an email from the Stated Clerk of Presbytery declaring the man to be “in good standing” or (in the case of a Chaplain Candidate) “under care” in the presbytery. The Armed Forces Chaplain Board requires every Chaplain Candidate Applicant to have approval by the Applicant’s Denominational Endorser on a Defense Department 2088 Ecclesiastical Endorsement Form.
7. ___ Ensure Military Chaplain Candidates are in an “under care” status (a military service seminary program in which the student becomes a 2nd Lieutenant or Ensign (depending on his service branch) while he trains with and explores the military chaplaincy). All Chaplain Candidates must be approved by the PRCC.

PRCC Denominations: Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC), Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), The United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA), Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC), Korean Presbyterian Church in America – Koshin (KPCA)

The PCA Logo

In 2016, the 44th General Assembly approved for the first time a logo for the Presbyterian Church in America. The logo is available for use¹ by PCA churches, presbyteries, and General Assembly-level ministries.

To better assist those using the logo, we offer a PCA Logo Standards Guide. Any use of the PCA logo must be in keeping with the instructions included in this guide.

The PCA Logo Standards Guide and logo files are available for download on the Administrative Committee's website here:

<http://www.pcaac.org/pca-logo/>

Please encourage your presbytery's churches and ministries to use the logo as they are able. If any questions arise, please contact ac@pcanet.org, or call the Administrative Committee at 678-825-1000.



¹ NOTE: An official ministry of the Presbyterian Church in America is defined as a General Assembly-level committee or agency, a PCA presbytery, a PCA particularized or mission church. Other ministries or organizations – including those approved for advertising or exhibiting with the PCA General Assembly – wishing to use the PCA logo in any form must first receive express written consent by the Office of the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church in America. Please refer these requests to ac@pcanet.org.